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ABSTRACT

This evaluation of the second-year (1986-87) implementation of the New York City (New York) Dropout Prevention Initiative (DPI) in 13 high schools focuses on student characteristics and outcomes, with a discussion of a set of statistical data on program services, findings on school-level indicators of program effectiveness, and an analysis of program costs. The DPI has been organized to test the effectiveness of the following models of service delivery: (1) pure systemic, in which services are directed toward changing the entire school environment; (2) modified systemic, in which some case management services for at-risk students are provided by community-based organizations (CBOs); (3) modified CBO, in which case management services provided by CBOs are augmented with some funding for systemic services; and (4) pure CBO, in which the program consists entirely of case management services provided by CBOs. Data were analyzed from the following sources: (1) site visits; (2) interviews with school personnel; (3) logs of services delivered to students; (4) a student attitude survey; (5) the New York City Board of Education's student data base; and (6) monitoring reports on CBOs. Overall, the DPI was not successful in improving student attendance or academic achievement enough to ensure that students would be able to earn a high school diploma within a reasonable length of time, although targeted students were less likely to drop out than eligible-but-not-targeted students. Recommendations for improvement are included. Statistical data are included on 36 tables and 15 graphs. (FMW)

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EVALUATION OF THE NEW YORK CITY DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE

FINAL REPORT ON THE HIGH SCHOOLS FOR YEAR TWO, 1986-87

by

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The 1986-87 school year was the second full year of the New York City Dropout Prevention Initiative. The evaluation project's *Interim Report for Year Two*, published in September, 1987, described the status of program implementation during Year Two, and the *Final Report on the Middle Schools for Year Two*, dated March, 1988, presented data on middle school student characteristics, program services, outcomes, and costs. This current report presents comparable data on high school student characteristics and outcomes, with a discussion of a set of statistical data on program services, findings on school-level indicators of program effectiveness, and an analysis of program costs.

Program Background

The Dropout Prevention Initiative (DPI) is a project of the New York City Board of Education, in cooperation with the Mayor's Office of Youth Services and the city's Office of Management and Budget. Established in 1985, the Initiative received over $30 million in special city funding for the first three years of program operation. Its primary objective is to support new approaches toward helping the city's public schools retain students who are most at risk of dropping out. To that end, the Initiative offers middle school students and beginning high school students a wide range of services and, at the high school level, provides a degree of support for school-wide change efforts. Further, the Initiative promotes new directions in service delivery by involving community-based organizations (CBOs) in dropout prevention; these organizations contract to work on-site in a school, developing services that are intended to go beyond the traditional offerings of the school itself.

Schools. As in the previous year, 42 schools were part of the Initiative during 1986-87, including 29 middle schools and 13 high schools. Of the high schools, 10 comprise the Board of Education's High School Dropout Prevention Program (DPP) and 3 are from the state-funded Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program (AIDP). The programs in the ten DPP schools are under the leadership of Dr. Victor Herbert, Assistant Superintendent for Dropout Prevention. The AIDP programs in the three additional high schools are administered through the Office of High School Support Services, under the direction of Bernard Wolinez. These three schools are included in the Dropout Prevention Initiative because their AIDP programs involve a community-based organization providing services to students. All of these high schools were initially selected to receive dropout prevention program funding because their dropout rates were above the city-wide average. The high schools in the Initiative are listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1

High Schools Participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative
Year Two, 1986-87

School	Borough	Program Model
Louis D. Brandeis HS	Manhattan	Modified Systemic
DeWitt Clinton HS	Bronx	Pure CBO/AIDP
South Bronx HS	"	Modified CBO
Theodore Roosevelt HS	"	Modified Systemic
William H. Taft HS	"	Modified Systemic
Far Rockaway HS	Queens	Modified CBO
Bushwick HS	Brooklyn	Modified Systemic
Eastern District HS	"	Modified Systemic
Erasmus Hall HS	"	Pure CBO/AIDP
John Jay HS	"	Modified Systemic
Lafayette HS	"	Pure CBO/AIDP
Prospect Heights HS	"	Modified CBO
Thomas Jefferson HS	"	Modified CBO

The middle schools that are part of the Initiative are the primary feeder schools for the ten DPP high schools, with three schools participating from each of nine local community school districts and two schools included from a tenth district. The middle school dropout prevention programs are administered through the Board of Education's Office of Student Progress.

Program models. The Dropout Prevention Initiative has been organized to test the effectiveness of various modes of service delivery. Schools vary along two dimensions in their program designs -- the types of services given, and the providers of services. Four program models were designed at the high school level:

a) pure systemic, in which services are directed toward changing the entire school environment (3 DPP high schools);

b) modified systemic, in which some case management services for at-risk students are provided by CBOs, but the bulk of services are directed toward the school as a whole (3 DPP high schools);

c) modified CBO, in which case management services provided by community-based organizations are augmented with some funding for systemic services (4 DPP high schools); and

d) pure CBO, in which the dropout prevention program consists almost entirely of case management services through a CBO (3 AIDP high schools).

Through the first two years of program implementation, no school adopted the "pure systemic" model; all high schools have contracted with at least one community-based organization. For this reason, the pure systemic and modified systemic schools have been combined into a single modified systemic model (except in the chapter on program costs, where we maintain the original categorization in order to illustrate budgetary patterns which led us to combine the categories). Similarly, the three AIDP schools included in the Initiative have not adopted a true "pure CBO" model. The program's intent in these schools was never defined as a CBO-only program, but instead encompasses the requirements for school-based services that are part of the AIDP program in all sites, as well as incorporating a CBO component into the overall mission and strategies. Thus, the majority of targeted students in these schools receive school-based instructional and support services in addition to the services provided by the CBO. These services, in fact, include block scheduling of classes, which was mandated for all AIDP students in 1986-87 (the only comparable component in the DPP schools were the transitional classes for returning truants). A relatively small number of students in two of these three schools were served by the CBO alone in 1986-87; these students may be present on the rosters because the CBO worked with more students than expected, or because there was not the in-school coordination necessary to ensure that all CBO students were considered part of the official program roster and eligible for the full range of services, or because they were identified too late in the school year to be included in the block programming. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, we have used these CBO-only AIDP students to represent "pure CBO" students in our evaluation, but we recognize that they do not represent the complete AIDP program in their three schools, and that those AIDP programs are much more than "pure CBO" programs.

Community-based organizations. Fourteen different community-based organizations have been involved in the Dropout Prevention Initiative -- five have programs at the middle school level and eleven at the high school level (two CBOs have programs at both levels). Most of the CBO programs are built around counseling and attendance monitoring and follow-up. Several of the CBOs (especially North West Bronx Clergy and Community Coalition, Federation Employment and Guidance Services, and Grand Street Settlement House) provide job readiness training and/or volunteer or paid work experience opportunities for students. One of the CBOs -- Urban Adventures -- works within a classroom structure to teach students outdoor survival skills, and then takes students on Outward Bound-type excursions. Another program, the Project SMART program developed by Victim Services, trains students to be conflict mediators and then provides mediation services to students and staff in school. Two CBOs (Aspira and Pius XII) direct their services primarily toward Hispanic students. The largest CBO program is Operation Success, sponsored by Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS). This program is a counseling and work readiness program that includes case management services, diagnostic vocational evaluations, opportunities for job skills training in several fields, and placements in educational internships. It is in place in all four schools in the modified CBO model and in all three schools in the pure CBO model. Operation Success is, in fact, the major component of the Dropout Prevention Initiative in these seven schools, and a key aspect of the evaluation is to determine the relative effectiveness of this large-scale program. (A smaller version of the Operation Success program, known as Operation Futures, is used in one of the modified systemic high schools, and a similar Operation Advance program is in place in two middle schools.)

Community-based organizations participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative are listed in Table 1-2.

Program components. The Dropout Prevention Initiative provides for the delivery of a range of services to high school students. These are primarily supportive services. The Initiative was not intended to address the instructional needs of at-risk students, but to enable schools to help with problems that sometimes prevent students from participating fully in the regular academic program. Program services are grouped into the

Table 1-2

Community-Based Organizations Participating in the High School Dropout Prevention Initiative, 1986-87

Community-Based Organization	School Affiliation	Program Model	Primary Activities
Aspira	School 8	Modified Systemic	Counseling, crisis intervention, basic skills training, leadership development
Cathedral of St. John/ Manhattan Valley	School 5	Modified Systemic	Attendance outreach, counseling, leadership training
Good Shepherd Services	School 7	Modified Systemic	Attendance outreach, counseling, crisis intervention
Grand Street Settlement House	School 10	Modified Systemic	Counseling and supportive services, linkage to employment programs
Green Chimneys/Project Continue	School 5	Modified Systemic	Individual and group counseling
Northwest Bronx Clergy and Community Coalition	School 1	Modified Systemic	Counseling, referrals, vocational program, youth organizing, after-school activities
Federation Employment and Guidance Service (FEGS) -- Operation Success	School 3 School 11 School 12 School 13 School 2 School 4 School 9	Modified CBO Modified CBO Modified CBO Modified CBO Pure CBO/AIDP Pure CBO/AIDP Pure CBO/AIDP	Case management and supportive services, attendance outreach, vocational evaluation, job skills training, tutoring, part-time community jobs
-- Operation Futures	School 8	Modified Systemic	Case management, attendance outreach, vocational evaluation, job skills training, part-time jobs
OutThere Productions	School 7	Modified Systemic	Video/poetry instruction
Performing Arts Crisis Training (PACT)	School 7	Modified Systemic	Crisis intervention, conflict mediation, mediation training
Pius XII Family and Community Services	School 6	Modified Systemic	Case management, group services
Urban Adventures	School 8	Modified Systemic	Counseling, outdoor adventure program
Victim Services -- Project SMART	School 1 School 3 School 8 School 12	Modified Systemic Modified CBO Modified Systemic Modified CBO	Conflict mediation training, mediation, case follow-up, classroom seminars

following components:

(1) Program Facilitation. Each school has a facilitator or coordinator who manages the program at the building level. In the ten DPP high schools, a "DPP Team" consisting of approximately ten staff members (teachers, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, and CBO staff) is involved in planning and overseeing the dropout prevention programs.

(2) Attendance Outreach. Student attendance is monitored and parental awareness is solicited through letters, phone calls, and home visits. Incentives, such as prizes, awards, or special activities, are provided to encourage attendance improvement.

(3) Guidance and Counseling. Group and individual guidance and counseling services are supposed to be provided to students, in addition to those they would normally receive through the school.

(4) Health Services. Diagnostic screening services and appropriate referrals are intended to be available to at-risk students, in order to address health or behavioral problems which interfere with successful school performance.

(5) School-Level Linkages. Special attention is supposed to be given to students making the transition from middle school to high school. Activities are designed to promote student familiarity with high school life and to facilitate a smooth passage from one school level to another.

(6) Alternative Educational Programs. High interest educational programs that supplement regular instructional services are meant to be provided to students. These may include peer tutoring and other methods of individualized instruction, extra-curricular activities related to career education, and recreational or cultural activities designed to encourage better attendance and improve achievement.

(7) Security. In the ten DPP high schools, improved security was seen as an important aspect of dropout prevention and school improvement. Services in this component range from the provision of additional personnel and equipment to the use of conflict mediation services to manage student behavior problems. An automated attendance system was provided to the ten DPP schools under this program component.

Student eligibility criteria. At the high school level, in 1986-87, students were selected for program participation on the basis of the following criteria:

a) 20 or more absences in the previous spring term, or 40 or more absences during the previous year;
b) designated long-term absentee (LTA) during 1985-86 but

with 10 or more days of attendance during September-October, 1986 (a minimum of 100 students must meet criterion a or b);

c) participated or eligible to participate in 1985-86 dropout prevention programs but no longer eligible due to improved attendance;

d) referred by principal as "at-risk" (no more than 5 percent of target population);

e) failed 3 or more major subjects because of excessive cutting;

f) special education student.

In addition, Operation Success programs could serve students who missed ten days or more in any two consecutive months during 1986-87. In general, long-term absentees -- those students absent a full calendar month at a time -- were considered inappropriate for program participation, since the Dropout Prevention Initiative was intended as a retention program, not a retrieval program. Inevitably, however, a number of long-term truants were included in the program.

Program Evaluation

The Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, has undertaken a three-year evaluation of the Dropout Prevention Initiative, under contract with the Board of Education. As stated in the Request for Proposals for the evaluation contract, the evaluation of the Dropout Prevention Initiative is designed to measure program effectiveness in terms of five general objectives:

a) the effectiveness of the Initiative in improving attendance and reducing dropouts in the schools overall and for targeted students in particular;

b) the relative effectiveness of the different models of service delivery;

c) the relative effectiveness of schools within each model;

d) the appropriateness of specific services for different types of students; and

e) the relative cost effectiveness of each service delivery model.

Year One evaluation. In its study of the Initiative's first year, the evaluation project reported the following major findings for the high schools:

> Facilitation was implemented earliest in the year, followed by attendance outreach, guidance and

counseling, security, alternative education, school linkage, and health. As in the middle schools, the gradual start-up of services meant that, in effect, many schools had a dropout prevention program in place for much less than the full year.

Unexpectedly, from the standpoint of the program's design, all 13 of the high schools in the Dropout Prevention Initiative worked with at least one CBO. Overall, the relationship between the schools and the CBOs was more positive at the high school level than at the middle school level, reflecting in part the fact that high schools had a say in the selection of the CBOs working with them. Still, serious issues of coordination remained in many of the schools.

Attendance monitoring and outreach tended to be emphasized more by school personnel than by CBO personnel in the high schools.

The dropout prevention programs increased counseling resources in all of the high schools. The CBOs particularly tended to organize their programs around counseling.

Although two schools were exceptions, the high school personnel were generally dissatisfied with school level linkages. Health was also widely regarded as a weakly-implemented component.

DPI-funded educational alternatives took many forms in the high schools, including curriculum development and teacher training for the regular instructional program, course enrichment activities, reorganization of students and staff into clusters or minischools, reduction of class size, special tutoring programs, transitional programs, job skills development, after-school activities, and classes for credit before or after regular school hours.

The ten DPP high schools took various measures to strengthen school security. These included the installation of an automated entry system, hiring and equipping extra security personnel, and, in a few schools, training guards and students in mediation and conflict resolution techniques.

A total of 6068 students were identified as high school program participants. Overall, the students targeted for the program were highly at risk. Almost one-quarter had been absent more than 80 days in the 1984-85 school year. More than half of the targeted students had failed 5 or more courses during 1984-85, and more than 90% had failed at least two courses.

Between 1984-85 and 1985-86, there was a drop of attendance of 9.1% for the targeted high school students overall. Targeted students passed 4.8% fewer courses during the dropout prevention program than before entering it. The declines in attendance and the proportion of subjects passed are similar to what would be expected in the absence of a program for similarly situated students.

There were substantial differences among schools in attendance and achievement outcomes between 1984-85 and 1985-86. These differences, however, were closely related to differences in students targeted for services in the various schools.

Year Two evaluation. During the second year of the Initiative, the evaluation project has collected both quantitative and qualitative data on program implementation, the student population served, and performance outcomes. Data gathering activities and sources at the high school level include the following:

a) Ethnographic observations of program activities in all thirteen schools;

b) Informal, semi-structured interviews with principals, program coordinators, Board-level administrators, CBO supervisors, teachers, counselors, and other service providers in all 13 schools;

c) Development and collection of logs documenting services delivered to students during three time periods (December, March, and May);

d) Administration of a student attitude survey to a sample of targeted students in all schools;

e) Examination of CBO contracts and high school program plans;

f) Examination of monitoring reports on CBOs, from the Office of Funded Programs; and

g) Collection of statistical data on student eligibility characteristics, program participation, prior attendance and achievement, and current year attendance and achievement (in conjunction with the Office of Educational Assessment).

h) Collection of budget and expenditure data from schools, program administrators, and Board of Education business offices.

The data collected have been subjected to standard forms of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Year Two program implementation. The Year Two Interim Report presented information about the status of program implementation -- the programs and activities in place at the program sites -- and discussed some of the school and program features that combined to characterize the Initiative. Some of the findings pertaining to the high schools were the following:

> By June, 1987, the implementation of the Dropout Prevention Initiative was found to have reached a stage of routine activity for most of the components in most of the high schools -- "routine" meaning that activity occurred on a regular basis, procedures were set, and staff knew their roles, but also that few major changes were being implemented. This was a substantial development beyond the Initiative's first year, when more activities were in start-up phases. At the same time, relatively few components were being scrutinized within schools for refinement or for larger, more general changes, except during the summer, when high school DPP teams participated in a Summer Institute which focused on program planning for the coming year.
>
> For the most part, the programs experienced staff continuity between the first and second years, and most of the program staff were in place in the high schools by September. The major start-up problem for Year Two concerned the identification of student participants, although this proceeded more smoothly than in the first year. A continued problem was the provision of target lists to the CBOs, the accurate identification of students who had become long-term absentees, who were technically not eligible for the program, and the early identification of at-risk students who would be entering the high schools in the fall term.
>
> Overall, relations between the high schools and their CBOs improved between the program's first and second years. Collaboration was reported to be better in six schools, and to have remained good in three additional schools.
>
> Program facilitation occurred daily from the beginning of the school year in the high schools. Under attendance outreach, twelve of the thirteen high school programs utilized phone calls for monitoring and follow-up; twelve also make home visits, and eleven reported using attendance incentives.
>
> All thirteen high schools offered individual guidance as part of their dropout prevention programs; group guidance occurred in all but one school. The range of guidance services was much narrower in the pure systemic schools (using the original program models) than in the modified systemic and the pure and modified CBO programs. Many of the additional guidance services

in these latter models were provided by the CBOs.

At the high school level, health activities varied widely among schools, and the modified systemic model offered the widest range of health services. Health screening was reported in eight schools, health fairs and individual health education in five, and health-related referrals in four. Several schools were in the process of developing on-site health clinics during the year.

A greater variety of linkage activities was implemented in the high schools in 1986-87 than during the previous year. Most of these activities occurred after January, when new funding and regulations for linkage through the AIDP program were made available.

Alternative education activities in the high schools ranged on a continuum, from activities affecting a student's entire academic program (e.g., a block-scheduled transitional class) to one-day cultural enrichment or recreation activities. Three activities were common to all four high school models: transitional programs for returning truants, job skills training, and before- or after-school clubs. During Year Two, the extent of alternative education activities was substantially increased in the modified CBO high schools (largely through funding for GED teachers and transitional classes), and stayed at essentially the same levels as in Year One in the high schools of the other models.

Under security, five high schools implemented some form of conflict mediation or crisis intervention counseling or training. Two schools used program funds for extra security personnel, and six schools reported using their automated attendance systems as a security device.

The quality and extent of high school program implementation appeared to depend on several key factors. One was the quality of program staff, and especially of the program coordinator and CBO site supervisor. Often, a single good staff person, at any level of the program, could make something happen. However, it was only in the schools where the coordinator or site supervisor was a skilled manager that the dropout prevention program acquired a coherent identify and seemed to have a strong presence in the school. Staff quality, in turn, depended on having adequate training, time, and resources. High school staff had a number of opportunities for individual and group training, through on-site team meetings, periodic coordinators' meetings, on-site technical assistance from central program staff, and an annual retreat and summer planning institute (both for the ten DPP schools only).

A second key factor affecting implementation was a school's overall commitment to dropout prevention and school improvement. In the DPI high schools, there were both instances of schools using the program to support major structural and programmatic changes, as well as instances of schools adopting the program but not really capitalizing on it. This in turn was related to staff quality, the ways personnel throughout a school were involved in the program, and a school's ability to generate and use information about performance at the school level as well as the level of the individual student.

Finally, cooperative staff relations, and the active involvement of the principal, also affected program quality. When a staff did not work well together, or when the principal withheld his or her support for the dropout prevention program, new ideas were harder to implement and program activities often lacked a sense of comprehensive impact.

Observations in the schools concluded that overall the components of the Dropout Prevention Initiative were being implemented as intended. However, the evaluators increasingly questioned whether services were sufficiently comprehensive for individual students, or how much the services affected students' total experience in school. Findings from our service logs, reported in Chapter 3 below, and from the student survey, reported in Chapter 5, pursue these questions further.

Chapter Two

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE, 1986-87

This chapter summarizes statistical data on the background characteristics of high school students who participated in Year Two of the Dropout Prevention Initiative (DPI). In a later chapter, we will present program outcomes at the student and school levels, and will discuss relationships between student's background characteristics and their outcomes -- attendance, course performance, and reading achievement.

Student Samples

A total of 4854 students were identified by school and CBO personnel as having been part of the Dropout Prevention Initiative in 1986-87. In order to understand the impact of various aspects of the program, and to facilitate data collection on a reasonable number of students, we divided this group of students into several different samples.

a) Full program rosters in the 10 DPP high schools. In February and March, 1987, the DPP staff identified students who had participated in their programs during the year. In all, 3418 students were named on the full program rosters. Table 2-1 shows the roster size in each school, and what proportion these students represent of the total school enrollment.

b) Evaluation sample students in the 10 DPP high schools. From the full program rosters, Teachers College selected a random sample of approximately 150 program students in each DPP high school. This evaluation sample was developed in order to reduce the burden of data collection for some of the schools with large program enrollments. Many of the statistical analyses described in this report pertain to the evaluation sample. A total of 1483 students from the ten DPP schools are included in this sample.

c) Program students in the 3 AIDP high schools. In the three AIDP schools included in the Dropout Prevention Initiative, school and CBO staff identified all students who participated in the AIDP program during the fall and/or spring terms, 1986-87. This sample includes 1436 students -- 1147 who received both school and CBO services, as well as 88 who received only school services, and 201 who received only CBO services in the program. (In the Board of Education's parallel evaluation of the AIDP program, students who received only CBO services are not included as part of the program enrollment. Thus, the Teachers College sample of 1436 is larger than the Board's sample of 1223.) Table 2-2 shows the breakdown of program students in each school, by category of program participation, along with the proportion they represent of the total school register.

Table 2-1

Students Participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative DPP High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	Total School Register	DPP Full Roster	Roster as % of total register
1	2,807	153	5.5%
3	2,423	212	8.7%
5	2,792	444	15.9%
6	3,469	425	12.3%
7	3,206	176	5.5%
8	3,618	509	14.1%
10	2,441	222	9.1%
11	2,043	923	45.2%
12	2,850	152	5.3%
13	1,009	202	20.0%
TOTAL	26,658	3,418	12.8%

Table 2-2

Students Participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative AIDP High Schools, 1986-87

School	Total Register	CBO Only*	School Only	School + CBO	AIDP Total	% of total Register
2	5,038	28	66	411	505	10.0%
4	3,728	153	10	437	600	16.1%
9	3,014	20	12	299	331	11.0%
TOTAL	11,780	201	88	1,147	1,436	12.2%

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*These students are considered "pure CBO" students and are included in the evaluation sample for the Dropout Prevention Initiative.

d) Evaluation sample students in the 3 AIDP high schools. Because the 3 AIDP high schools were included in the Dropout Prevention Initiative as the "pure CBO" model, we included the 201 students who received CBO services only, with no school-based instructional or other services through AIDP, in our program evaluation sample. In two of the three schools, only a few students received CBO services only, while in the third school, over 100 students were identified as participating in the CBO portion of the program alone. Several explanations can be suggested for this situation: first, that in two of the schools there was a greater coordination of service delivery between the school and CBO staff; and second, that in the third school especially, the CBO was exceeding its contract requirements by offering services to additional students. In no case were program personnel instructed to develop a roster of students served by the CBO only; it is largely a coincidence that there were any students at all who could be considered part of a "pure CBO" model.

The DPP high schools, and especially the six schools in the modified systemic program model, were expected to provide some overall school improvements and direct student services that reached the general school population as well as a designated target group. In order to measure these "trickle-down" effects, and also to compare the progress made by program students with that made by other students, we have selected several samples of at-risk, non-targeted students in the DPI high schools as well as other AIDP high schools. These samples will be described more fully in Chapter Four.

Accuracy of the Samples

Two major factors compromise the degree to which the program rosters accurately represent those students who actually participated in the Dropout Prevention Initiative.

First is the difficulty of naming all program participants or beneficiaries. Some of the DPI program services were specific and self-contained enough to permit the use of "program enrollment lists." For example, it was possible for most community-based organizations to keep a list of those students with whom they had regular contact; often this relationship was formalized by obtaining a parental consent form for participation. In other cases, however, the number of student participants was either too large or too fluid to keep track of. Community-based organizations generally reported having provided initial outreach services or other occasional services to more students than they included on their program enrollment lists. A number of schools implemented activities through their Dropout Prevention Programs that involved more students than were named on any program list; such activities included after-school clubs or special academic classes either before, during, or after school. One school repeatedly claimed that all of its students were program participants, since the Dropout Prevention Initiative in that site fostered a major school reorganization. Program personnel were instructed to include on their enrollment lists all students who received "intensive monitoring" or who were considered by the school to be DPP students, but in several cases, staff had to make relatively arbitrary decisions about which students in the larger programs would be put on the official program lists. Further, some program services did not lend themselves at all to keeping a list of participants. Schools which used DPP funds for smaller class sizes, new curricula, additional attendance outreach workers or guidance counselors, or attendance incentive contests and awards, could not possibly create lists of all students who benefited from these program components. Thus, it is likely that the use of program enrollment lists for the Dropout Prevention Initiative has resulted in only an approximate measure of either the size or nature of the program population, and of the true effects of the program.

The second complicating factor is the timing of the creation of program enrollment rosters. In the three AIDP schools, program staff identified student participants at three different points in the school year: during the fall term, at the end of the fall term, and near the end of the spring term. In the ten DPP high schools, however, program personnel were not asked to formally identify student participants on enrollment lists until February or March. By this time, some of the schools had removed from their program some students who participated in the fall but were no longer participating -- students who had become long-term absentees (LTAs) or who were discharged from school. It is likely that this updating of program participants was done in order to improve the distribution of services to students. On the other hand, in other schools, and particularly in the community-based organizations who were somewhat more accountable for the total number of students served, most or all of the students who had participated since the beginning of the year were still included as program participants. In effect, then, there are two different types of enrollment lists: one set which has been largely cleared of long-term absentees or dropouts, and one which includes such students. Clearly, the outcomes for programs using different types of lists would be expected to differ.

On the basis of field research and interviews with program staff, we identified the schools which appeared to have dropped LTAs or discharged students from their program enrollments. Our assessments were confirmed by the finding from our statistical analysis that LTAs and discharged students, particularly dropout discharges, were in fact found in much lower proportions in student samples from the schools we had identified. As it turned out, all of the schools with cleared lists were part of the modified systemic program model; one additional modified systemic school and all of the modified and pure CBO schools had lists that included more LTAs and discharged students. Thus, direct comparisons of student characteristics and outcomes across schools, and particularly across program models, are less valid because different samples of students are represented. For this reason, in the following discussions we will group schools according to whether they have cleared or uncleared student lists.

Missing Data

A third cautionary remark must be made before we present statistical findings on the program students. The strength of conclusions which can be drawn from the samples is weakened by the extent of missing data on many of the relevant variables. Data were missing both from the Board of Education's central computer files and from the information collected directly from student records at the schools. Some examples of the extent of missing data for the evaluation sample (150 students in each of the 10 DPP schools and the CBO-only students in the 3 AIDP schools) are the following:

Total number of students in evaluation sample: 1684

Missing 1985-86 attendance data: 27%
Missing 1986-87 attendance data: 9%
Missing either 1985-86 or 1986-87 attendance data: 30%
Missing data on 1985-86 courses: 19%
Missing data on 1986-87 courses: 19%
Missing either 1985-86 or 1986-87 course data: 30%
Missing date of program entry: 45%

There is mixed evidence on the question of whether students with missing data would have had nearly the same or different background characteristics or outcomes than the students for whom the data are available. We cite several relevant findings:

(1) Students who are missing attendance data for both semesters of 1986-87 have prior year attendance and subjects passed rates that are about the same or slightly lower than the rates for students without missing data, and present year courses passed rates that are comparable to those for students not missing data. However, 32% of the students with missing 1986-87 attendance data were discharged as dropouts, compared to 12% of the students for whom data were not missing. Likewise, 42% of the students missing subjects passed data for both terms of 1986-87 were discharged as dropouts, while only 8% of the students who had at least one term of subjects passed data in 1986-87 were discharged as dropouts. These dropouts would likely have lower 1986-87 attendance and courses passed rates, and would lower the change scores, if their data were available.

(2) Students who were missing just one semester of attendance data, usually the spring semester, had much

lower rates of passing courses in that year than students who had both semesters of attendance data. Likewise, students who were missing just one semester of data on courses passed tended to have much lower rates of attendance. In order to include the most students possible in a sample, we propagated the available semester of data to the missing semester, but this technique probably overestimates performance in most cases.

With these caveats in mind, we now turn to an examination of the characteristics of students who participated in the Dropout Prevention Initiative. Findings will be based on students in the program evaluation sample, unless otherwise indicated.

Characteristics of Students Served

Proportion of the at-risk population. As noted above, a total of 4854 students were identified as having participated in the Dropout Prevention Initiative in the 13 high schools. Was the program able to reach all, or at least a sizeable proportion, of the eligible at-risk students? Table 2-3 shows the total number of students in each high school who were eligible for the program on the basis of prior year attendance (40+ absences, or 20+ spring absences), along with the total number of students at each school identified as having been served by the program and the number of these students who met one or both of the attendance criteria. Over 8400 students in the 13 schools had prior year attendance rates that made them eligible for dropout prevention program services. In the full program rosters, thirty-seven percent (or 1802) of the program participants had 40+ prior year absences, and forty percent (or 1907) had 20+ prior spring absences. There is some overlap between these groups, such that 2104 or forty-three percent of the students on the full program rosters met one or both of these criteria. This leaves an additional 6357 students who were eligible for the program but were not officially enrolled in it.

The Dropout Prevention Initiative was intended to serve ninth and tenth graders primarily; considering these two grades only, an estimated 5441 students were eligible for the program. Of these students, 1618 were listed on program rosters, leaving 3823 eligible ninth and tenth graders who were not listed as served by the program. Some of the eligible, unlisted students in the modified systemic schools undoubtedly participated in program-sponsored activities or services; nevertheless, it is clear that the program has only been able to reach less than a third of all eligible students. Perhaps it has rarely been supposed that the Dropout Prevention Initiative would be able to serve all eligible students; we make this point to underscore the dimensions of the issue in these schools.

Reasons for program eligibility. Program staff in the 10 DPP high schools identified the criteria under which students

Table 2-3

Students Eligible for Dropout Prevention Services on the Basis of Prior Year Absences*
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	Attendance-eligible students*	Full program roster	Attendance-eligible students listed on program roster	% Eligible listed on on roster
1	833	153	31	3.7%
2	1174	505	259	22.1%
3	533	212	91	17.1%
4	487	600	229	47.0%
5	595	444	201	33.8%
6	714	425	125	17.5%
7	810	176	78	9.6%
8	782	509	176	22.5%
9	559	331	118	21.1%
10	439	222	112	25.5%
11	580	923	543	93.6%
12	720	152	78	10.8%
13	235	202	63	26.8%
TOTAL	8461	3418	2104	24.9%

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*Eligibility is determined by 40+ absences in 1985-86 or 20+ absences in Spring, 1986. This column includes students in grades 9-12.

were selected as eligible for the program (this information was not collected on the CBO-only students in the AIDP schools). The 1483 evaluation sample students in the ten schools were distributed as follows:

40+ absences in 1985/86: 39.7%
20+ absences in Spring 86: 44.4%
LTA in 1985-86 and 10 days present in Fall, 1986: 4%
Participated last year but no longer eligible: 12.6%
At-risk referral: 16.6%
Three or more course failures due to cutting: 27.0%
Meets no criteria: 2.6%
10 or more Fall 86, absences (Operation Success only): 3.6%
Special education student: .4%

Because the above figures were based on a check-off by program personnel without any other verification, we examined the correlation between the attendance-related selection criteria and students' actual attendance figures on the Board of Education's SIS database. We found a high, statistically significant correlation.

These figures sum to more than 100% because 917 students (54%) were identified as having met more than one eligibility criterion. Other students may have met more than one criterion also, but were not listed as so because data were not available to program personnel. When we examined raw data on students that corresponded to the selection criteria (e.g., scores on the reading test instead of the check-off of the criterion for low reading ability), 40.5% of all evaluation sample students were found to have met two or more of the following selection criteria: 40+ full-year absences, 20+ spring absences, 2+ years overage, low reading level, or limited-English proficiency.

Sex. Of the 1684 evaluation sample students, 51% were male and 49% were female.

Grade level. Students participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative were distributed among grade levels as shown below. Over three-quarters of the high school students were in the ninth or tenth grades. Just over eight percent of the students were reported to be in special education. In the thirteen schools overall, 9.2 percent of the total registers were special education students in 1986-87; thus, the representation of special education students in the Dropout Prevention Initiative appears to be slightly lower than their representation among the broader school populations.

Grade	Percent of the Full Program Roster	Percent of the Evaluation Sample
Grade 9:	48.4%	49.8%
Grade 10:	28.6%	26.5%
Grade 11:	10.6%	9.7%
Grade 12:	2.8%	3.0%
Special education:	5.9%	8.1%
(Missing):	3.7%	3.0%

Nearly half (49%, or 825) of the evaluation sample students had not been promoted to a higher grade at the start of the 1986-87 school year. This includes 530 (63%) repeat 9th graders and 208 (47%) repeat 10th graders.

Approximately five percent of the evaluation sample students had been discharged from school the previous year and were readmitted during 1986-87.

Age. Student age was calculated by subtracting the year of a student's birth from 1986, the beginning date of the current school year. The ages of high school students in the DPP evaluation sample ranged from 13 to 21 years, as shown in the table below.

Age	Evaluation Sample
14 or younger	4.1%
15 years old	16.4%
16 years old	30.5%
17 years old	24.8%
18 years old	11.8%
19 or older	7.4%
(Missing)	4.8%

More than 300 of the 1684 students in the evaluation sample were older than 18; in other words, nearly a fifth of the program students were beyond the expected age of high school completion. Indeed, over three-quarters of the evaluation sample students were at least one year older than the expected age for their grade level, and about half of the students were at least two years overage for grade. This was more pronounced for ninth graders, where 63% percent were 2 or more years overage. The figures for the various grades are as follows:

% of 9th graders who were 2+ years overage for grade: 63%
% of 10th graders who were 2+ years overage for grade: 54%
% of 11th graders who were 2+ years overage for grade: 48%
% of 12th graders who were 2+ years overage for grade: 46%

The drop in percentage of overage students in the higher grades does not, of course, mean that students somehow are becoming less overage, but that overage students are leaving school before they get to the higher grade levels. Such a trend, along with the sheer size of the overage high school population, suggests that a new interpretation of the "typical" high school career may be in order, drawing special attention to the needs of older students.

Language proficiency. Just over seven percent of the students in the evaluation sample were identified as "limited-English proficient," on the basis of having scored below the twentieth percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) or being coded as limited-English proficient on the Board of Education's central data files. This may well be an underestimate, since 14% of the students responding to a survey administered by Teachers College reported that they preferred speaking a language other than English with their friends, and 29% said they spoke a language other than English most of the time at home. Moreover, various agencies currently recommend a higher cutoff LAB score for determining eligibility for bilingual instructional services.

Reading level. Standardized reading test scores were available for 52% of the program evaluation sample students. For these students, the average test score was at the 60th percentile. Scores ranged from the 25th to the 99th percentile.

Prior attendance. Overall, high school students in the Dropout Prevention Initiative had low rates of attendance during the prior year (1985-86); the average proportion of days present was 70.9%.

There were moderate grade-level differences in prior attendance for the full program rosters and evaluation sample students, as follows:

Grade	Average Prior Year (1985-86) Attendance: Full Program Roster	Average Prior Year (1985-86) Attendance: Evaluation Sample
Grade 9:	66%	67%
Grade 10:	73%	73%
Grade 11:	75%	78%
Grade 12:	75%	75%
Spec Ed:	68%	68%

The average prior year attendance for students who were 2 or more years overage for grade was 70%, whereas it was 73% for all other students.

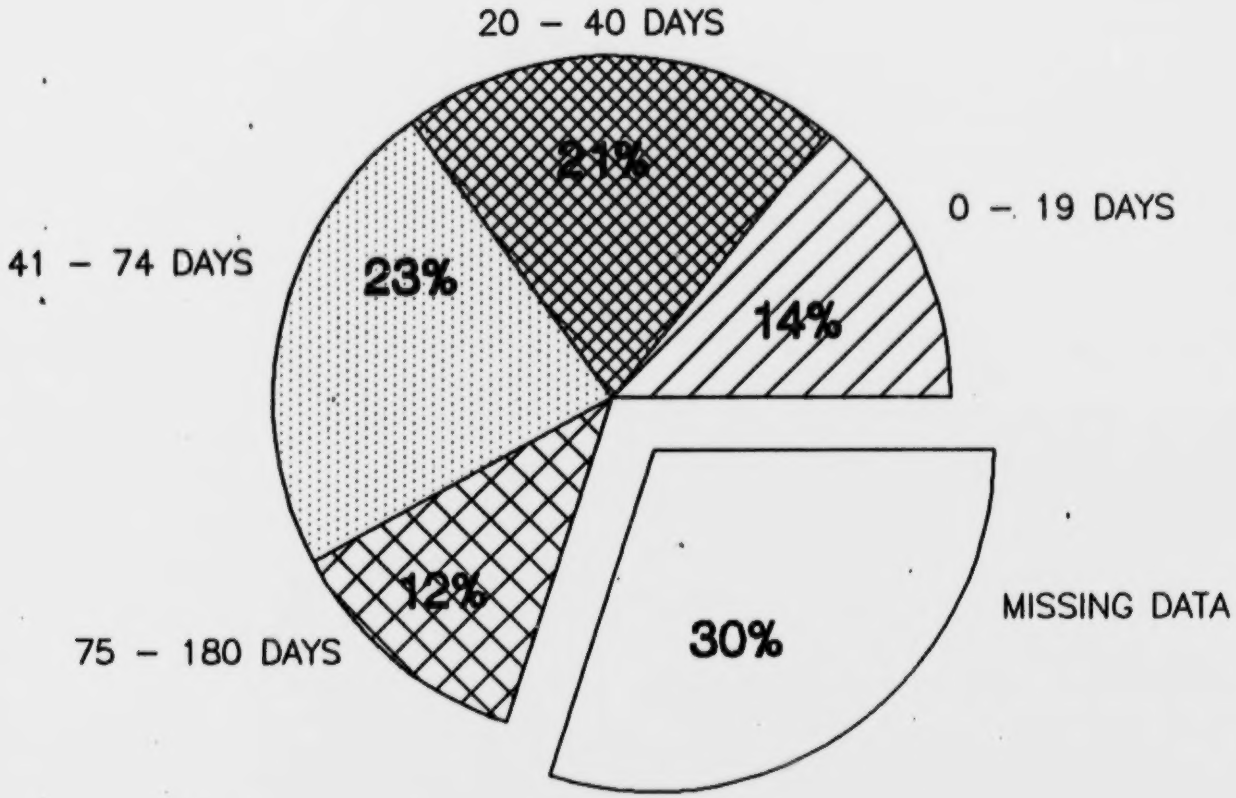
The prior year attendance rates for males and females were similar: 70% for males and 71% for females.

The distribution of students in categories of prior absences is shown in Figure 2-1. Fourteen percent of the evaluation sample students had relatively high attendance the prior year, with fewer than 20 absences. Twenty-one percent of the students had 20-40 absences the prior year, and 23% had 41-74 absences the

Figure 2-1

PRIOR YEAR ABSENCES

DPI High School Students, 1986-87



DAYS ABSENT, 1985-86

prior year. Twelve percent of the students in the evaluation sample had 75-180 absences in 1985-86 -- a high proportion of students, given the stronger emphasis in Year Two on not enrolling long-term absentees in the program.

Prior courses passed and failed. The overall average proportion of courses passed during the prior year for evaluation sample students was 44.5% percent. That is, students in the 1986-87 Dropout Prevention Initiative passed just under half of their courses the prior year.

The distribution of students in categories of prior proportion of courses failed is shown in Figure 2-2. Over half of the students had failed more than 40% of their prior year courses. A small proportion (6%) of the students passed all of their courses the previous year.

As with attendance, there were grade-level differences in the proportion of prior courses passed, as tabulated below.

	Average Prior Year (1985-86) Courses Passed Full Program Roster	Average Prior Year (1985-86) Courses Passed Evaluation Sample
Grade 9:	36%	39%
Grade 10:	50%	48%
Grade 11:	56%	59%
Grade 12:	62%	60%
Spec Ed:	44%	45%

Overage students had passed 37% of their prior year courses; students who were the expected age for grade level had passed 51%.

Prior course performance for males and females was more disparate than their prior year attendance rates were: males had passed only 39.5% of their prior courses, compared to 44.2% prior courses passed for females.

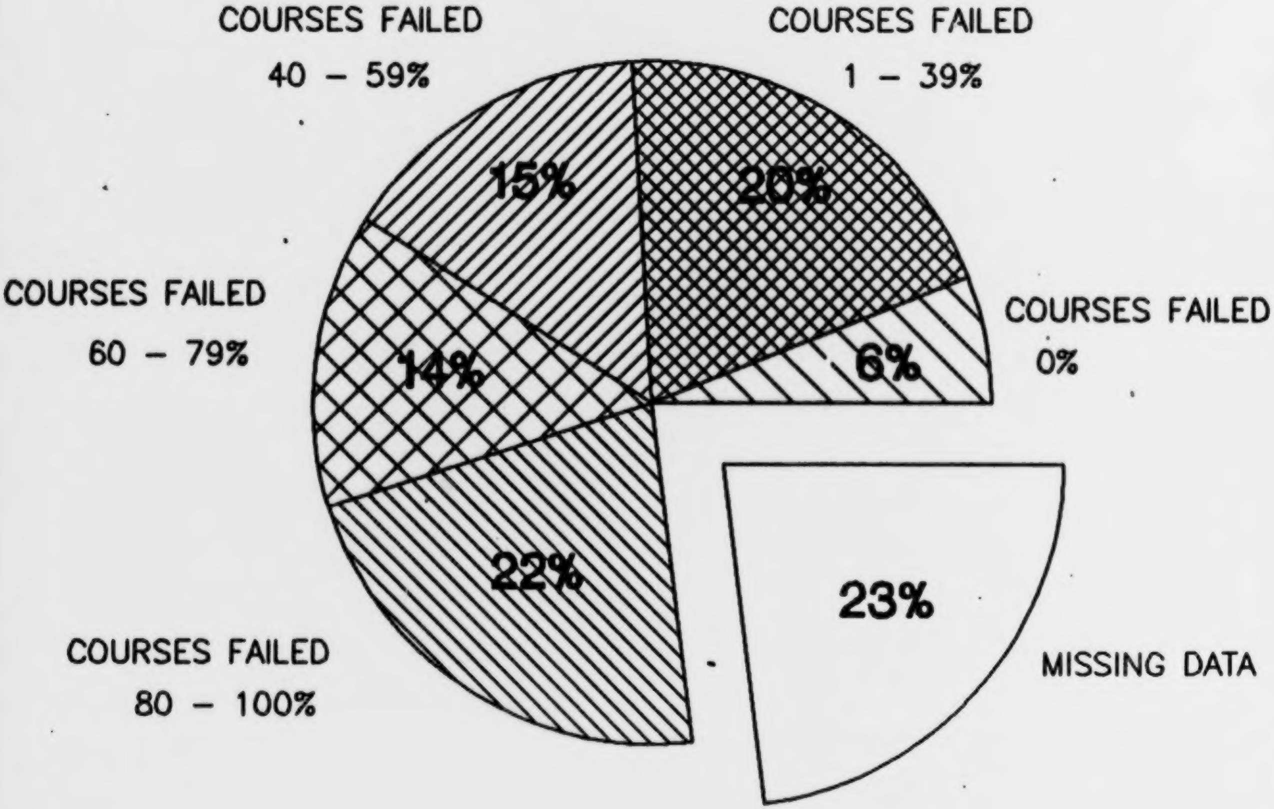
There were strong relations between prior attendance and prior proportion of courses failed. For example, the students who had failed relatively few (1-39%) of their prior year courses had an average prior year attendance rate of 83%, while students failing most (80-100%) of their prior year courses had an average prior attendance rate of only 55%. It is, of course, impossible to ascertain what the exact relationship between attendance and course performance is -- whether the lack of success in the classroom is leading to poor attendance, or vice versa. Nonetheless, the low academic performance of program students clearly indicates that students have additional needs in this area.

Student background differences across schools. We have noted earlier that it is difficult to compare student

Figure 2-2

PROPORTION OF PRIOR YEAR COURSES FAILED

DPI High School Students, 1986-87



COURSES FAILED, 1985-86

characteristics across schools, because some schools submitted lists of program participants that included long-term absentees and students who had been discharged in the fall term, while other schools did not. Given this, we can observe some reasonably valid differences among the program students in the thirteen high schools by grouping schools according to the nature of their program enrollment lists. Table 2-4 does so and shows the proportion of program students who are two or more years overage, the average prior attendance, the average prior proportion of courses passed, and the average prior reading scores for students in the DPI schools.

Among the schools with cleared lists, School 1 had the highest average prior attendance rate (81%), and School 7 had the lowest (69%). Of the schools with uncleared lists, School 13 had the highest prior attendance rate (79%) and School 10 the lowest (57%). Similarly, among the schools with cleared enrollment lists, the program students in School 1 also had the highest average rate of prior courses passed (65%), while School 6 had the lowest (44%). School 13 had the highest prior year courses passed rate (53%) of the schools with uncleared lists, and the rate in School 10 was the lowest (28%). These differences within the two sets of schools illustrate that schools were targeting somewhat different types of students for program services, even after accounting for whether long-term absentees and discharged students were removed from the rosters. There was less variation in average prior year reading levels among the schools. The highest value for schools with cleared lists was 63% in School 7, compared to the high for uncleared schools of 62% in School 4. The lowest value was 58% in School 8 of the set with cleared lists, and 56% in School 13 with uncleared lists.

Student background characteristics across DPI models and programs. The same reservations that apply to comparing student characteristics across schools also hold for comparing characteristics of participants in the three service delivery models and the two organizational programs of the Dropout Prevention Initiative. Table 2-5 shows average prior year attendance, courses passed, and reading test scores for the evaluation sample students in the modified systemic, modified CBO, and pure CBO models, and for evaluation sample students in the Dropout Prevention Program versus those in the Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program (recalling that this latter group includes just those students served by a CBO only, and that most of these students were found in one of the three schools). Not surprisingly, students in the modified systemic model had, on average, higher rates of prior year attendance than the students in the other two models; the lists in this model tended to have been cleared of LTAs and discharged students who might have brought those averages down. Evaluation sample students in the AIDP program had much lower rates of prior year attendance and courses passed -- a finding in line with our observation that the schools may have considered these students nearly unreachable and asked the CBOs to make a final effort to retrieve them.

Table 2-4

Characteristics of Targeted Students
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	N*	Percent Overage 2+ yrs.	Average Prior Year Attendance	Average Prior Year Courses Passed	Average Prior Year DRP Reading Score
OVERALL	1684*	57.2%	70.9%	44.5%	59.9%
			DPP SCHOOLS WITH LISTS CLEARED		
1	148	43.1%	81.3%	65.2%	58.8%
5	150	67.6	73.7	50.6	62.3
6	136	61.1	71.1	43.9	60.4
7	148	47.3	68.9	45.6	62.6
8	158	51.1	74.2	45.6	57.6
			DPP SCHOOLS WITH LISTS NOT CLEARED		
3	152	51.7	69.9	40.7	61.9
10	144	63.9	57.3	27.6	58.4
11	157	51.1	70.9	49.3	58.7
12	148	65.7	67.8	40.8	59.3
13	142	67.7	78.7	53.2	56.3
			AIDP SCHOOLS WITH LISTS NOT CLEARED		
2	28	65.0	66.6	34.6	60.3
4	153	56.9	66.1	29.7	62.1
9	20	38.5	67.3	51.2	60.0

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*N = all on students in the evaluation samples: approximately 150 randomly chosen students per DPP school and all students served only by the CBO in the AIDP schools. The average for each of the background characteristics is calculated on a smaller sample of students who have complete data on the variable.

Table 2-5

Student Background Characteristics, by Model and Program DPI High Schools, 1986-87

Model/ Program	N*	Percent Overage 2+ yrs.	Average Prior Attendance	Average Prior % Courses Passed	Average Prior DRP Reading Score
OVERALL	1684	57.2%	70.9%	44.5%	59.9%
Modified Systemic Model	884	56.2%	71.4%	46.6%	60.1%
Modified CBO Model	599	58.9%	71.5%	44.7%	59.2%
Pure CBO Model	201	56.5%	66.2%	32.3%	61.7%
DPP Program	1483	57.3%	71.5%	45.8%	59.8%
AIDP Program	201	56.5%	66.2%	32.3%	61.7%

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*Analyses are based on students in the evaluation samples: approximately 150 students per DPP school and all students served only by the CBO in the AIDP schools. The average for each of the background characteristics is calculated on a smaller sample of students who have complete data on the variable.

Characteristics of students in the different community-based organizations. Table 2-6 shows the background characteristics of the students enrolled in the various community-based organization programs. In some cases, the representation of CBO students in the evaluation samples for the ten DPP high schools was low; therefore we are reporting data on CBO students in the full program rosters for the DPP schools (AIDP schools are represented only by the students served only by the CBO).

Eight of the CBOs targeted services to students who were slightly more at risk, on the basis of prior year attendance, than the DPP students overall in their schools (we exclude from consideration Out There Productions, which listed only one student as part of the program roster for the Dropout Prevention Initiative). For instance, the average prior year attendance of program students in School 1 was 81%, while the average prior year attendance rate for the students in that school who participated in the Northwest Bronx Clergy and Community Coalition program was only 72%. Among the CBOs, Good Shepherd Services enrolled students with the lowest prior year attendance rate (59%). The students in Project SMART, the conflict mediation program, had the highest prior year attendance (89% in School 1 and 91% in School 3); this is not surprising, since the student mediators who were listed on their enrollment rosters were not necessarily drawn from an at-risk population. The Aspira program students had average prior year attendance of 82%, the second highest rate among CBOs. The four Operation Success programs in the DPP schools averaged 69% prior attendance, a relatively low rate among all CBOs.

There was more of a range of prior year courses passed rates among the community-based organizations (Table 2-6). Overall, students in the DPP CBOs (excluding the three AIDP schools) passed 44% of their prior year courses, slightly below the rate for program students overall. Students in the Grand Street Settlement program had the lowest rate (36%), and students in Project SMART again had the highest rate (83%). Operation Success students passed on average 42% of their prior year courses, slightly below the average for all CBOs.

Characteristics of students in the AIDP programs. As we have discussed above, the 201 AIDP students included in the evaluation of the Dropout Prevention Initiative are those served only by the CBO (Operation Success) in their schools. However, many more students were part of the AIDP programs in the three schools. Some of these students (N=88) received only school-based services, generally a special instructional program such as blocked classes, or access to additional guidance and counseling. Other students (N=1147) were served by both the school and the CBO. We describe the characteristics of these students and, in a later chapter, their program outcomes as a type of comparison group, in order to broaden the context within which the performance of the students in the Dropout Prevention Initiative can be understood.

Table 2-6

Characteristics of Students in CBO Programs
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School/CBO	Prior Year (1985-86) Attendance (N)*	Prior Year (1985-86) Courses Passed (N)*
DPP Schools Overall	71.5% (1229)	45.8% (1370)
DPP CBOs Overall	71.6% (1144)	44.1% (1118)
School 1	81.3% (87)	65.2% (132)
NWBronx	72.0% (30)	46.6% (47)
Proj. SMART	88.6% (23)	81.1% (26)
School 3	69.9% (110)	40.7% (143)
Op. Success	68.8% (134)	36.6% (163)
Proj. SMART	91.0% (8)	90.9% (8)
School 5	73.7% (123)	50.6% (104)
St. John	76.8% (31)	46.3% (8)
Green Chimney	72.5% (34)	52.5% (7)
School 6	71.1% (81)	43.9% (113)
Pius XII	68.9% (26)	45.2% (17)
School 7	68.9% (109)	45.6% (143)
Good Shepherd	59.2% (26)	39.7% (32)
OutThere Prod	(only one student listed on roster)	
School 8	74.2% (123)	45.6% (136)
Aspira	82.1% (84)	51.6% (88)
Op. Futures	72.3% (256)	39.5% (251)
Urban Advent.	78.8% (24)	53.7% (28)
Proj. SMART	(no data given)	
School 10	57.3% (85)	27.6% (121)
Grand Street	69.4% (35)	36.0% (42)
School 11	70.9% (147)	49.3% (154)
Op. Success	67.4% (246)	46.7% (236)
School 12	67.8% (123)	40.8% (143)
Op. Success	67.3% (119)	41.0% (138)
Proj. SMART	(no data given)	
School 13	78.7% (104)	53.2% (49)
Op. Success	77.5% (65)	46.1% (22)
School 2/		
Op. Success only	66.6% (17)	34.6% (16)
School 4/		
Op. Success only	66.1% (112)	29.8% (104)
School 9/		
Op. Success only	67.3% (8)	51.2% (12)

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* N=students for whom data were available. For the ten DPP schools, school-level figures are calculated for students in the evaluation sample only; CBO figures are based on *all* students listed as enrolled in the CBO programs. Calculations for the three AIDP schools are based on students receiving CBO services only; the N given is the number of students for whom data were available.

Table 2-7 presents some of the characteristics of the AIDP students receiving both school and CBO services -- the largest of the AIDP program samples. These students were divided among the three AIDP schools in the Dropout Prevention Initiative: 411 in School 2, 437 in School 4, and 299 in School 9. Of these 1147 students, 35% were ninth graders and 37% were tenth graders; the comparable figures for students in the ten DPP schools were 54% ninth graders and 25% tenth graders. The proportions of eleventh and twelfth grade students were more similar in the two programs, with 10% eleventh graders and 2% twelfth graders in the AIDP schools, and 11% eleventh graders and 3% twelfth graders in the DPP schools. Special education students were better represented in AIDP school-and-CBO sample than in the DPP full program rosters, however: they comprised over 9% of the targeted students in the former group, compared to only 6% in the ten DPP schools.

The average proportion of prior year (1985-86) days present for the students in the AIDP program who were targeted for both school and CBO services, and for students in the ten DPP schools, was identical at 70%. In the AIDP sample, School 4 had the highest average prior year attendance, at 76%; School 2's rate was 66% and the rate for School 9 was 67%. (It should be recalled that all of the school lists in this sample were "uncleared;" that is, they contained names of students who became LTAs or were discharged in the fall term.) The average proportion of prior year courses passed was 39% for the students in this AIDP sample, compared to 44% for the DPP full roster students. In general, then, the AIDP students targeted for both school and CBO services were slightly more at risk in terms of prior course performance than their DPP counterparts, but comparable in terms of prior attendance.

An additional 88 AIDP students were targeted for school-based services only; 66 of them were from School 2, 10 from School 4, and 12 from School 9. Data on this sample are also shown in Table 2-7. These students' average prior year attendance rate was 65%, compared to 70% for both the DPP full roster and the AIDP school-and-CBO sample. Their prior course performance was even lower than for the larger AIDP sample; these students passed on average 36% of their courses in 1985-86, compared with 39% for the school-and-CBO sample in AIDP and 44% for the full DPP program rosters.

These samples will become important again as we trace through the program outcomes for the various groups of students in Chapter Four.

Comparison with Students Targeted in Year One (1985-86)

In general, the targeted high school students identified in Year Two of the Dropout Prevention Initiative were somewhat different from the students who were in the program in Year One, 1985-86. A total of 4854 students were listed on program rosters

Table 2-7

Characteristics of Students in the AIDP School-Based Comparison Group

DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	(N)	Grade Level 9th	10th	11th	12th	Spec Ed	Avg. Prior Attend.	Avg. Prior Courses Passed
All students receiving school-based services only or school-based and CBO services:								
2	477	30.7%	44.8%	11.3%	2.4%	7.7%	65.5%	31.4%
4	447	45.2	22.5	7.0	1.8	7.2	73.4%	39.9%
9	311	25.7	48.9	12.1	1.2	10.3	67.3%	44.4%
All students receiving school-based and CBO services:								
2	411	29.9%	45.0%	12.4%	2.2%	8.7%	65.8%	30.7%
4	437	47.1	19.0	7.6	1.6	8.7	75.6%	43.1%
9	299	25.8	50.5	11.3	10.7	10.7	67.3%	43.9%
All students receiving school-based services only:								
2	66	39.4%	50.0%	4.5%	3.0%	1.5%	63.0%	34.8%
4	10	30.0	30.0	10.0	---	10.0	86.8%	36.3%
9	12	33.3	41.7	16.7	---	8.3	68.3%	48.6%

for Year Two, compared to 6068 in Year One. There were slightly fewer ninth graders in Year Two (48%) compared to Year One (55%), and fewer tenth graders (29% in Year Two, 33% in Year One). The proportion of special education students fell slightly in Year Two, down from 6.4% to 5.9% (8.1% in the evaluation sample, which includes only part of the program rosters in the 3 AIDP schools). The average rate of prior year attendance was 72% in Year One, and 70% in Year Two; the rate of prior year courses passed was 37% in Year One and 45% in Year Two. (The figures on attendance and courses passed are calculated on a student sample that included all program students in the three AIDP schools in Year One, but only the AIDP students served just by the CBO in Year Two.)

The longitudinal study of program participants, to be presented in our final report, will identify which students were program participants for more than one year, and will discuss in more detail differences both in background characteristics and program outcomes for the different cohorts.

Conclusion

On the whole, the high school students served by the Dropout Prevention Initiative during 1986-87 were a population with low levels of success in school. During the year prior to the program year under study, they had been in school on average just over two-thirds of the time, and were passing fewer than half of their classes. More than half of them had not been promoted to a higher grade level at the end of the 1985-86 school year. Still, there were substantial variations among the students on all of the parameters that describe them, and these variations may be clues to ways that the Dropout Prevention Initiative can respond to the students differentially.

The statistics we have reported in this section just begin to describe the students who participated in the Dropout Prevention Initiative. Many other characteristics -- especially those which cannot be easily quantified -- are important in understanding the skills and resources they bring to school, their sensitivity to school experiences, and their probable educational trajectories. Some of these characteristics will be discussed in Chapter Five, on results from the student survey.

Chapter Three

PROGRAM SERVICES TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Introduction

As described in Chapter One, students participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative were intended to have access to a range of services, including attendance outreach, guidance and counseling, health services, school level linkages, alternative educational programs, and school security measures. In addition, students could interact with a variety of service providers, including teachers, guidance counselors, school aides, and family workers employed by the schools, and social workers, counselors, and paraprofessionals employed by the community-based organizations. Clearly, there is room for a great deal of variation in students' experiences through the Initiative, as they engage with different persons, at different sites, and in different activities. The picture of student participation in the dropout prevention programs can be further detailed by factoring in the length of time each student was enrolled.

This chapter considers several dimensions of students' involvement with the Dropout Prevention Initiative. First, we report on students' length of time in the program, and on the points in time when they were enrolled. Then, we briefly discuss which aspects of the program students were exposed to: school or CBO services, or both. Finally, we present an analysis of data on the specific contacts made between students and DPI personnel during three samples of time in the 1986-87 school year.

Duration of Program Participation

Overall, 79% of the targeted high school students in the evaluation sample were reported to have entered the Dropout Prevention Initiative in the Fall, 1986, school term. Table 3-1 shows the fall and spring term enrollments for the evaluation sample students in the various schools and models. The proportion of fall admits varies from 63% in School 8 to 91% in School 12 (School 9 is omitted here because its sample is so small). Schools with cleared lists tend to show slightly smaller proportions of students enrolled during the fall term; this is probably because some of their fall admits were removed from their rosters after they became LTAs or dropouts.

Table 3-2 shows the season of program entry by grade level. Over 80% of the ninth graders were enrolled in the program in the fall term; this was a higher proportion than for any other grade level except 12th grade, and is somewhat remarkable given that schools frequently reported problems in the early identification of incoming ninth graders who were at-risk and/or eligible for the program. Nearly three-fourths of the tenth and eleventh

Table 3-1

Semester of Program Entry for Targeted Students
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School	% Fall	(N)*	% Spring	(N)*
OVERALL	79%	(737)	21.0%	(196)
DPP SCHOOLS WITH LISTS CLEARED				
1	67.0%	(65)	33.0%	(32)
5	73.1	(19)	31.6	(7)
6	80.6	(29)	19.4	(7)
7	DATA MISSING			
8	62.7	(52)	37.3	(31)
DPP SCHOOLS WITH LISTS NOT CLEARED				
3	89.2%	(91)	10.8%	(11)
10	98.4	(122)	1.6	(2)
11	84.6	(55)	15.4	(10)
12	91.2	(134)	8.8	(13)
13	65.7	(44)	34.3	(23)
AIDP SCHOOLS WITH LISTS NOT CLEARED				
2	68.4%	(13)	31.6%	(6)
4	70.9	(107)	29.1	(44)
9	37.5	(6)	62.5	(10)
DPP TOTAL	81.8%	(611)	18.2%	(136)
Mod. Sys. Model	78.4	(287)	21.6	(79)
Mod. CBO Model	85.0	(324)	15.0	(57)
AIDP/Pure CBO Model	67.7%	(126)	32.3%	(60)

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* Based on students in the evaluation samples for whom information on date of program entry was available.

Table 3-2

Semester of Program Entry, by Grade Level DPI High Schools, 1986-87

Grade Level	% Fall	(N)*	% Spring	(N)*
OVERALL	79.0%	(705)	21.0%	(187)
9th grade	81.9%	(422)	18.1%	(93)
10th grade	73.6	(178)	26.4	(64)
11th grade	73.1	(49)	26.9	(18)
12th grade	86.2	(25)	13.8	(4)
Special Educ.	79.5	(31)	20.5	(8)

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* Based on students in the evaluation samples for whom information on date of program entry was available.

graders were reported to have been enrolled in the program during the fall term, along with 86% of the twelfth graders, and 80% of the special education students.

Table 3-3 shows the proportions of students in each school who fell into three categories of length of stay in the program: 0 to 3 months, 4 to 7 months, and 8 to 11 months. Of those students who had data on length of program participation (and there was a great deal of missing data on this variable as well as term of entrance), the majority (60.7%) were enrolled for over eight months, and another third (32.7%) were enrolled for 4 to 7 months. Although schools varied somewhat in the proportions of students enrolled for 8-11 versus 4-7 months, in general most schools had more students with longer program participation. In two schools with cleared lists (School 1 and School 5), and one school with an uncleared list (School 13), students were about evenly divided between these two categories.

Participation in School-based and CBO-based Services

There are two broad categories of program services or activities in the Dropout Prevention Initiative: those originating with the school itself, and those coming from community-based organizations. Students had access to both types of services in all schools, although the likelihood of receiving a school-based service was less in a modified CBO school, where the bulk of program resources were allocated to the CBO; conversely, the chance of being part of a CBO program was slightly less in a modified systemic school, where the CBOs comprised a smaller portion of the dropout prevention program. Table 3-4 shows the number of students in each school's full program roster who were involved with school services alone, CBO services alone, or both. This table also shows the total proportion of students on the full program roster who were in a CBO program, whether or not they were also involved in a school-based service.

As would be expected, nearly all of the students in the AIDP model schools were served by a CBO. Thirteen percent of the program students in School 2 received school services only, as did only two percent of the students in School 4 and four percent in School 9. In School 4, over a fourth of the program students received CBO-services only, but in the other two schools, the proportion was only six percent.

In two of the modified CBO model schools (Schools 3 and 12), most students listed on the program rosters were served by the CBO. It is likely that the CBO-served proportion of the rosters are so low in the two other modified CBO schools because of inconsistencies in how the rosters were developed (i.e., the rosters in these schools contained names of students selected by the school to receive CBO outreach but who were not ever enrolled in a CBO program). Similarly, it is somewhat confusing to see that none of the students in any of the modified CBO model

TABLE 3-3

Length of Program Participation
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School	% of all students in program					
Code	1-3 mos.	(N)*	4-6 mos.	(N)*	7-11 mos.	(N)*
OVERALL	9%	(84)	27%	(248)	64%	(592)
DPP Schools with cleared lists						
1	3%	(3)	38%	(37)	58%	(56)
5	--		54%	(14)	46%	(12)
6	--		19%	(7)	81%	(29)
7	DATA MISSING					
8	--		35%	(29)	63%	(52)
DPP Schools with uncleared lists						
3	6%	(6)	29%	(30)	65%	(66)
10	1%	(1)	17%	(21)	82%	(102)
11	14%	(9)	19%	(12)	66%	(43)
12	2%	(3)	18%	(27)	80%	(117)
13	15%	(10)	24%	(16)	61%	(41)
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO Schools (with uncleared lists)						
2	32%	(6)	26%	(5)	32%	(6)
4	25%	(38)	31%	(47)	42%	(63)
9	50%	(8)	19%	(3)	31%	(5)

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* Based on students in the evaluation samples for whom information on date of program entry was available.

Table 3-4

Students Receiving School-based and CBO-based Services DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	Served by School Only+	(N)	Served by School and CBO+	(N)	Served by CBO Only+	(N)	Full Roster	Total Served by CBO	% of Full Roster
Modified Systemic Model:									
1	44.0%	(66)	7.3%	(11)	48.7%	(73)	153	84	54.9%
5	76.2%	(326)	23.1%	(99)	0.7%	(3)	444	102	23.0%
6	84.5%	(344)	15.5%	(63)	0.0%	(0)	425	63	14.8%
7	78.8%	(134)	20.6%	(35)	0.6%	(1)	176	36	20.5%
8	8.3%	(41)	91.5%	(451)	0.2%	(1)	509	452	88.8%
10	31.0%	(27)	66.7%	(58)	2.3%	(2)	222	60	27.0%
Modified CBO Model:									
3	0.0%	(0)	0.0%	(0)	100.0%	(206)	212	206	97.2%
11	0.0%	(0)	0.0%	(0)	100.0%	(285)	923	285	30.9%
12	0.0%	(0)	0.0%	(0)	100.0%	(145)	152	145	95.4%
13	0.0%	(0)	0.0%	(0)	100.0%	(87)	202	87	43.1%
AIDP Model (includes *all* students in AIDP program in these schools):*									
2	13.0%	(66)	81.0%	(411)	6.0%	(28)	505	439	86.9%
4	2.0%	(10)	73.0%	(437)	26.0%	(153)	600	590	98.3%
9	4.0%	(12)	90.0%	(299)	6.0%	(20)	331	319	96.4%

+ Note: percentages here refer to the proportion of students with data on services, not the proportion of students in the full roster. (Data are available for all students in the AIDP model, however.)

* The "pure CBO" students are listed under "Served by CBO only".

schools were listed as receiving school-based services, when all of these schools had, at the least, GED programs and/or transitional classes for students in the program.

In all but one of the schools in the modified systemic model, over 95% of the students on the roster received school-based services. Two schools (School 1 and School 8) in this model had over half of the students on their program roster who received CBO services. School 8, in fact, had more students served by a CBO than any other of the ten schools in the Dropout Prevention Program, and more than two of the three AIDP schools included in the Dropout Prevention Initiative.

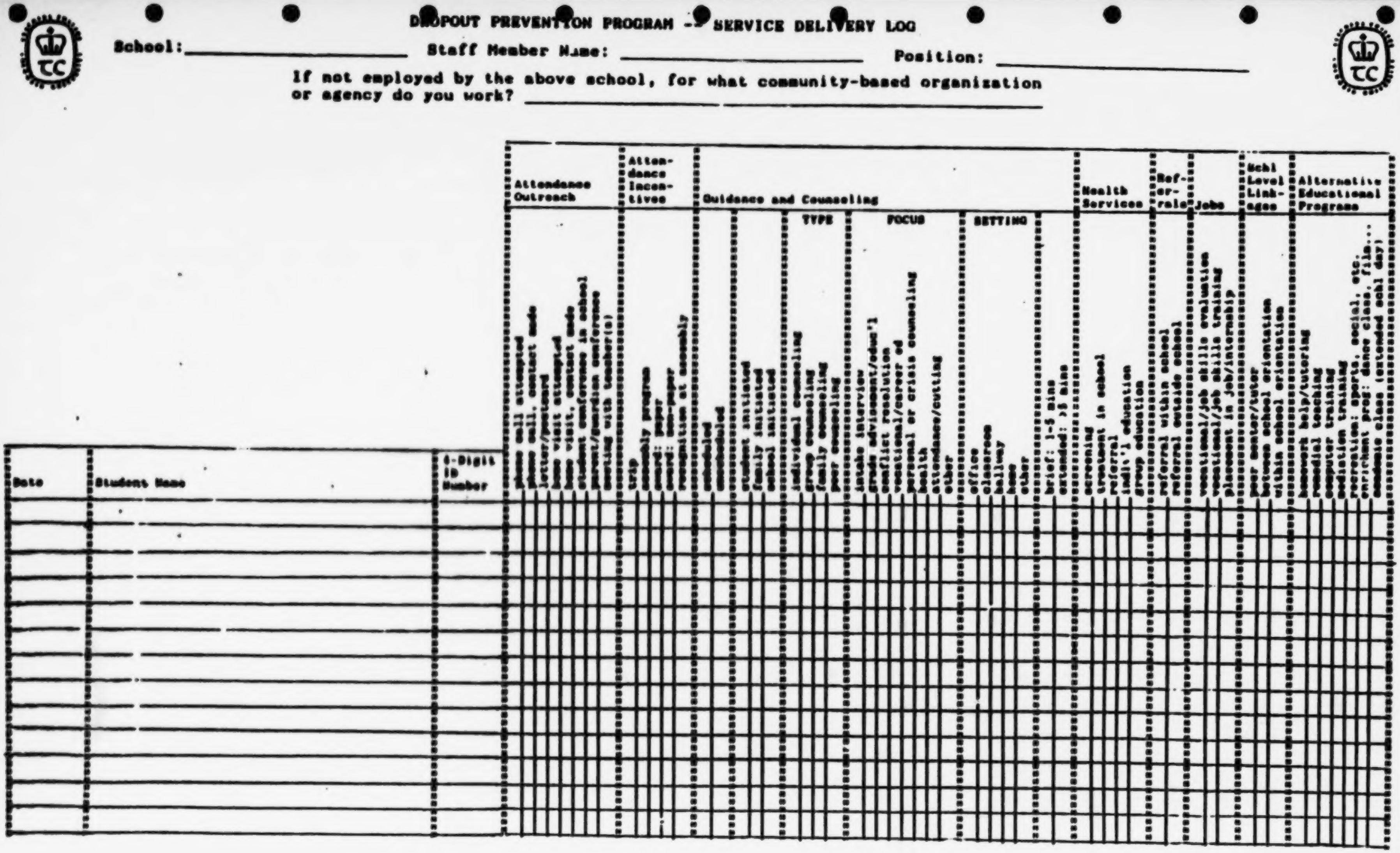
Services to Students Reported on High School Service Logs

Development of the high school log. The high school service log (Figure 3-1) was developed by the evaluation team in Fall, 1986, to try to capture the extent to which Dropout Prevention Program services reached students. Service providers -- school and CBO personnel working in the project -- were asked to keep a record of their contacts with all students, whether targeted or not, for three two-week periods during the year: in December 1986, March 1987, and May 1987.

The log covered all areas of the program -- attendance outreach, attendance incentives, guidance and counseling, health services, referrals, jobs, school level linkages, security and alternative education. The activities listed under each of these had been observed during our visits to the schools and the list was drawn up in consultation with school and CBO service providers. For guidance and counseling activities, we sought additional information about whether or not the contact was scheduled, who initiated it - the student, the student's family or the provider - its setting and its length. For activities which involved the regular meeting of a group, such as an alternative education class, we used a class roster format.

Providers were asked to write the name and four-digit code of every student with whom they had contact during each recording period, and to indicate by checking the appropriate columns what was the focus of the contact and other relevant information. The decision to request that providers report all contacts, target or not, was in part based on the need to avoid asking them to identify target students, but also recognized the fact that many schools did not offer services solely to a target group.

Service Providers. School facilitators and CBO staffs provided the names of service providers - classified by Teachers College as those people who were paid from, or provided by, program funds and who had direct or indirect contact with students. They included, for example, guidance counselors where a school had used program funds to increase its guidance staff, and attendance outreach staff who were responsible for sending letters to parents or for making telephone calls regarding



DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM -- SERVICE DELIVERY LOG

School: ____________________ Staff Member Name: ____________________ Position: ____________________

If not employed by the above school, for what community-based organization or agency do you work? ______________________________

			Attendance Outreach								Attendance Incentives					Guidance and Counseling																								Health Services					Ref-er-rals		Jobs			Schl Level Link-ages			Alternative Educational Programs						
																					TYPE				FOCUS								SETTING																										
Date	Student Name	6-Digit ID Number	phone call attempted	phone call, contact made	letter/postcard	home visit attempted	home visit, contact made	student conference in school	parent/guardian conference	meeting with teacher(s)	trip	assembly program	award: paper	award: non-paper	recognition at assembly	scheduled	unscheduled	student initiated	family initiated	school initiated	individual counseling	group counseling	family counseling	peer counseling	intake interview	grade advisement/educ'l	conflict resolution	vocational/career ed	personal or crisis counseling	health	attendance/cutting	other	office	classroom	hallway	home	other	brief: 1-5 mins	extended: >5 mins	screening	treatment in school	referral	indiv'l education	group education	referral within school	referral outside school	vocational/job skills evaluation	vocational/job skills training	placement in job/internship	peer mentor/tutor	between school orientation	within school orientation	homework help/tutoring	remedial teaching	computer training	mediation training	recreation: sports, social, etc.	enrichment prog: dance class, film...	academic class (extended schl day)

Figure 3-1

High School Service Delivery Log

students' absences - even though they did not have direct contact with students.

The numbers of providers working in the program differed widely from school to school, ranging from ten to sixty-five, and totaling about four hundred in all. Seventy-five percent of them returned logs in December, slightly less than half in March and one-third in May. As the total returns varied from period to period, so did the providers who reported, some returning logs for only one session, others for two, others for all three and some for none. However, four schools, (Schools 2,3,8 and 12) maintained a greater than seventy percent return rate for all three periods. Because the return rate in May was so small, we have used only the first two collections in this report. Table 3-5 shows the numbers of school and CBO providers who returned logs in December and March.

Results from the High School Logs

Interpreting the data. The information in the logs required very careful interpretation which we substantiated by reference to our intensive fieldwork. Not all of the logs were maintained in the same manner nor did every person submit records to us. The logs did not reflect the number of times that providers *tried* to make contact with students, and there was a degree to which the logs reported those activities which were most easily described by use of a checklist - it is easier to keep a roster of an alternative education class than to record a guidance and counseling contact, for example.

Lack of full reporting detracts from the viability of the logs as a record of the program's contacts with students. Because the response rate was unevenly spread across the various activities, there was likely to be an imbalance of reporting in one or another area in any particular school. Similarly, the fact that the providers who reported in March were not the same as those who reported in December should not necessarily be interpreted as a change in program - though that was indeed the case in at least one school - nor as a change in personnel. The complexity of this data collection was such that there was no way in which we could compensate for, or retrieve, missing information.

With these factors in mind, we stress that the information obtained from the logs is only that which was *reported*, and that we should, therefore, avoid the danger of assuming that every contact was - or even could be - assiduously recorded. With this considerable degree of caution we found that the logs showed interesting differences between the schools.

Kinds of services reported. The December logs showed variations between the schools on all the areas of service provision (Table 3-6). The highest number of contacts reported by a school was 6145, while the lowest was 486. Fully 90.6

TABLE 3-5

Proportion of Contacts by School and CBO Personnel
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

DECEMBER 1986

School Code	Total Providers	# of Schl Providers	# of CBO Providers	Total Contacts	# of Schl Contacts	# of CBO Contacts	% Schl Contacts	% CBO Contacts
1	48	46	2	6145	6037	108	98.2%	1.8%
2	10	1	9	849	9	840	1.1%	98.9%
3	17	9	8	1426	747	679	52.5%	47.5%
4	10	0	10	1654	0	1654	0%	100%
5	48	42	6	4097	3472	625	84.7%	15.3%
6	62	56	6	6202	5546	656	86.4%	10.6%
7	18	15	3	2197	1770	427	80.6%	19.4%
8	37	27	10	2800	1673	1127	59.8%	40.2%
9	4	1	3	550	39	511	7.1%	92.9%
10	13	10	3	646	385	261	59.6%	40.4%
11	16	12	4	704	347	357	49.3%	50.7%
12	10	4	6	486	84	402	17.3%	82.7%
13	5	1	4	691	132	559	19.2%	80.8%

MARCH 1987

School Code	Total Providers	# of Schl Providers	# of CBO Providers	Total Contacts	# of Schl Contacts	# of CBO Contacts	% Schl Contacts	% CBO Contacts
1	25	22	3	1475	1317	158	89.3%	10.7%
2	7	0	7	516	0	516	0%	100%
3	13	6	7	936	292	644	31.3%	68.8%
4	8	0	8	1240	0	1240	0%	100%
5	25	21	4	2294	2040	254	88.9%	10.1%
6	17	14	3	1164	934	230	80.2%	19.8%
7	18	16	2	2156	1942	214	90.1%	9.9%
8	36	26	10	2279	1410	869	61.9%	38.1%
9	6	0	6	912	0	992	0%	100%
10	11	6	5	570	190	380	33.3%	66.7%
11	8	3	5	624	165	459	26.4%	73.6%
12	9	3	6	813	138	675	17%	83%
13	5	2	3	339	35	304	10.3%	89.7%

TABLE 3-6

Distribution of Contacts by School and CBO Personnel
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

DECEMBER 1986

School Code	Total Attendance Contacts	Total Guidance Contacts	Total Health Contacts	Total Job-Related Contacts	Total Linkage Contacts	Total Alt. Ed. Contacts
1	4.2	8.8	1	0.4	1.5	88.3
2	74.6	36	15.1	12.3	0	1.9
3	19	32.5	1.8	1.3	0.2	44.3
4	12.8	35.8	0	53.6	0	0
5	15.3	54.8	11.5	1.1	5	20.7
6	12.7	23.4	3.6	0.7	0.5	49.8
7	31.8	31.7	0.8	0.9	0	41
8	25	50.8	3.8	1.2	0.8	12.6
9	6.5	90.6	16.7	0.7	0.7	15.7
10	46.5	30.7	2.6	11.1	15.8	1.9
11	17.6	51.4	8.1	8.7	0	6.8
12	24	52	18.6	50.9	0.2	23
13	2	31.9	0.4	56.2	0	1.7

MARCH 1987

School Code	Total Attendance Contacts	Total Guidance Contacts	Total Health Contacts	Total Job-Related Contacts	Total Linkage Contacts	Total Alt. Ed. Contacts
1	21	49.4	1.9	1.2	0	38.5
2	48.4	58.6	2.4	0.4	0.6	0
3	17.2	79.9	0.6	8	0.1	17.5
4	10.6	44.2	0.3	47.9	0	0.2
5	16.9	71.5	20.1	0.2	2.1	2.1
6	38.7	75	6	0.1	2.1	1.6
7	26	12.1	0	8.7	8.8	39.4
8	27	65.3	50.4	3.5	3.1	9.6
9	4.2	52.5	0.2	42.6	0	2.8
10	28.8	45.6	4	4.6	3.8	3.3
11	17.5	74.1	26.3	16.4	0.2	0.2
12	50.5	67.1	11.3	9.9	0.8	12.3
13	94.1	97.4	0	2.1	0.3	0.9

percent of all contacts in one school had a guidance and counseling focus, while in another the figure was 8.8 percent. (That is not to say, however, that 90.6 percent of all *students* had a guidance and counseling contact.) The major focus of guidance and counseling contacts varied from school to school, cutting, grade advisement and vocational education being those most frequently reported.

The figures for attendance outreach ranged from 70.6 percent to 2.0 percent, and in alternative education from 88.4 percent to 0. Again, the figure of 88.4 percent reflects the fact that there were numerous contacts with a few students rather than a few contacts with almost all students. Contacts which focused on jobs programs were reported high in half of the schools - ranging from 56.2 percent to 11.1 percent - while in the remainder such activities were negligible. In only three schools were more than ten percent of contacts health related - which was very much in line with our expectations - and for the linkage program that figure was reached in only one school (but it should be remembered that the December logs preceded a new linkage initiative which was, at that stage, just being developed).

As was mentioned earlier, reporting in March was lower than in December, and reflected different emphases in individual school programs - attributable possibly to the fact that a different group of providers reported. The majority of the schools reported guidance and counseling as the main focus of their programs, while the health and linkage programs again lagged far behind. Guidance and counseling contacts focused much less on cutting and more on vocational education and personal counseling - reflecting, perhaps, the recognition of a shift in the needs of the student population. Figure 3-2 shows these changes.

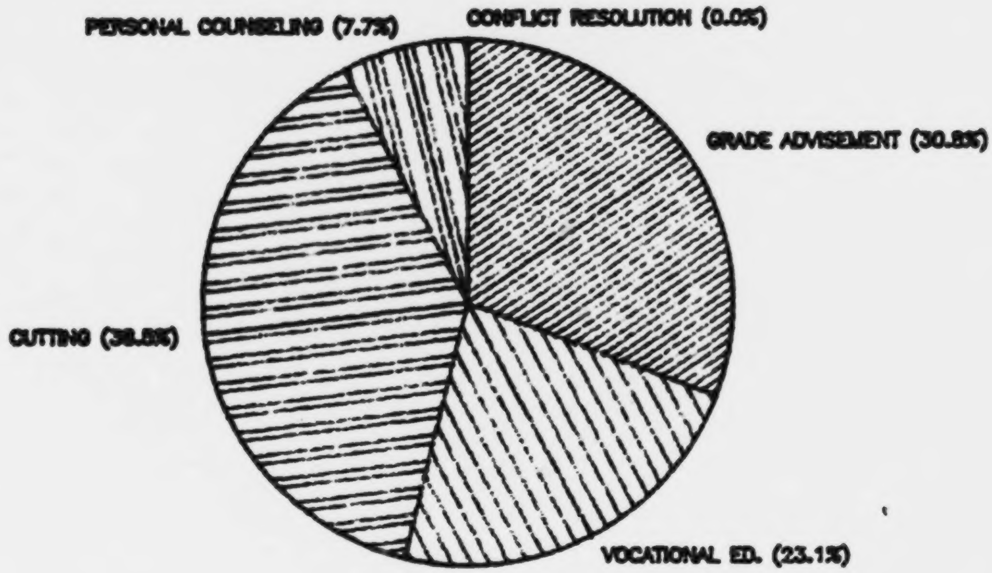
Our ability to be precise about figures - within the constraints already mentioned - is further jeopardized by the problem of transcribing handwritten names, and by the fact that recording of student four-digit codes was, in all but a handful of schools, very meager. In those schools where greater than seventy-percent of the codes were provided - four schools in all - we have been able to assess with some degree of accuracy the average number of contacts per student, and in each of them that number is very small. In each school there is a pattern of a few students receiving large numbers of contacts - twenty-three in one case - and the vast majority being contacted only once or twice. The activity for which those multiple contacts are recorded is usually an alternative education group, and the pattern suggests a systemic approach rather than case-management. More generally, the shortcomings of the logs mentioned earlier could be affecting the proportions of different services reported.

Who initiated contacts. To assess the extent to which students were taking responsibility for their own involvement in the program, we asked guidance and counseling providers to

Figure 3-2

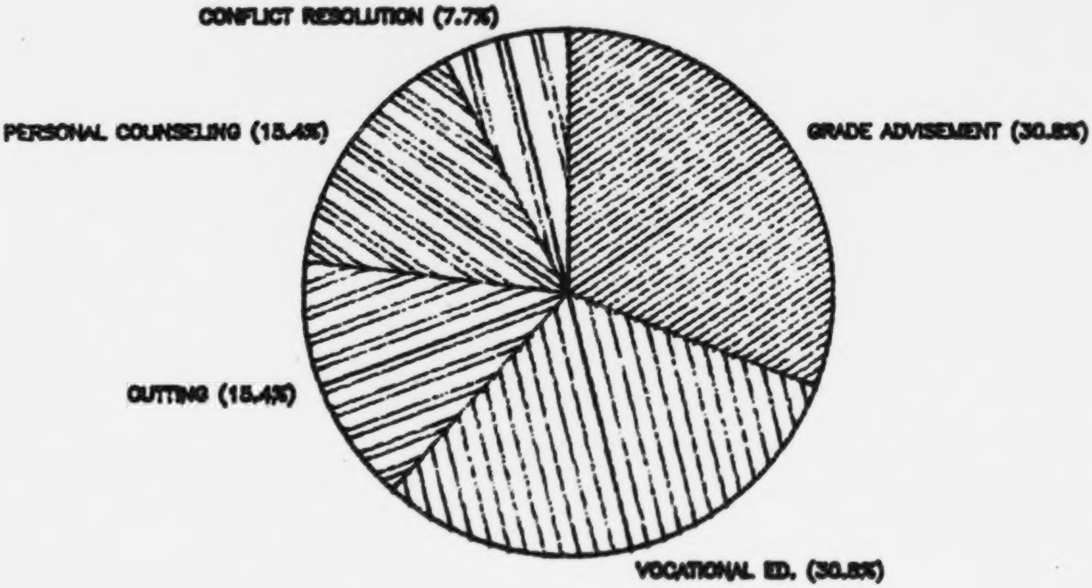
HIGH SCHOOL SERVICE LOGS DECEMBER 1986

GUIDANCE & COUNSELING MAJOR FOCUS



HIGH SCHOOL SERVICE LOGS MARCH 1987

GUIDANCE & COUNSELING MAJOR FOCUS



indicate who initiated each contact. It transpired that many other providers used this column to give that same information about their contacts. The percentage of all contacts in December reported as having been initiated by students ranged from 55.5 to 4.1, and in March the figures were much the same, lying between 39.4 and 4.4. (Figure 3-3).

Services reported by models. The differences between the schools were not consistent with the program models, no one group of schools reporting an emphasis in any particular area. Thus the schools with the greatest numbers of providers were in different models, as were those reporting the greatest number of contacts and as were those reporting, for example, attendance outreach as a major focus, and those reporting high or low numbers of student-initiated contacts. The same is true for the major focus of guidance and counseling contacts. We have mentioned the great difference in the numbers of service providers in the schools. The ratio of CBO to school staff showed similar differences from school to school, as Figure 3-4 indicates, and, again, was not consistent with the models.

High School Logs Data Collection for 1987-88.

Our experience in collecting and interpreting this information led us to make some important changes to our Year Three high school logs. It was clear that compiling the logs was very burdensome on service providers - some of whom recorded up to two hundred names during a single reporting period. This could explain the lack of four digit student codes on the majority of the logs - which, together with errors which naturally occur in transcribing peoples' handwriting, made the task of identifying precisely which students had received services almost impossible in most of the schools. Similarly, as can be seen in Figure 3-1, the log itself had a very complex format and did not clearly delineate areas of service provision. Thus checks for the same contact in the 'letter sent' column and in the 'cutting' column could be read as an attendance outreach contact or as a guidance and counseling contact. Such a problem could only be solved by referring to the role of the service provider who completed the form.

With these factors in mind we have made a number of changes for the data collection in the 1987-88 school year. We have designed a log for each program component, discussing with school and CBO personnel the activities which should be included under each. As might have been expected from last year's experience, some activities appear on several logs. By arrangement with the schools, all providers have been given logs appropriate to the activity in which they are involved. Where providers are involved in two quite different activities - the running of an after-school club and grade advisement for example - they have been asked to maintain two forms.

The more substantial change is our request that schools

Figure 3-3

Contacts Initiated by Students

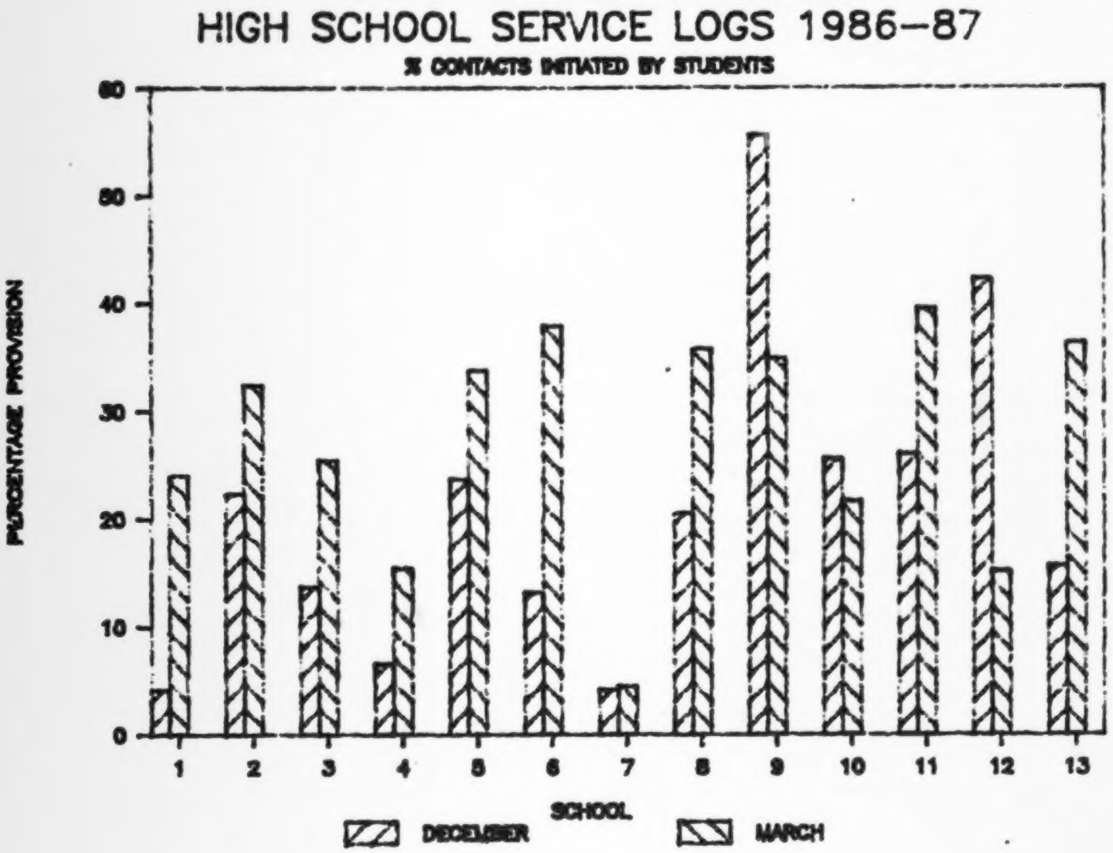
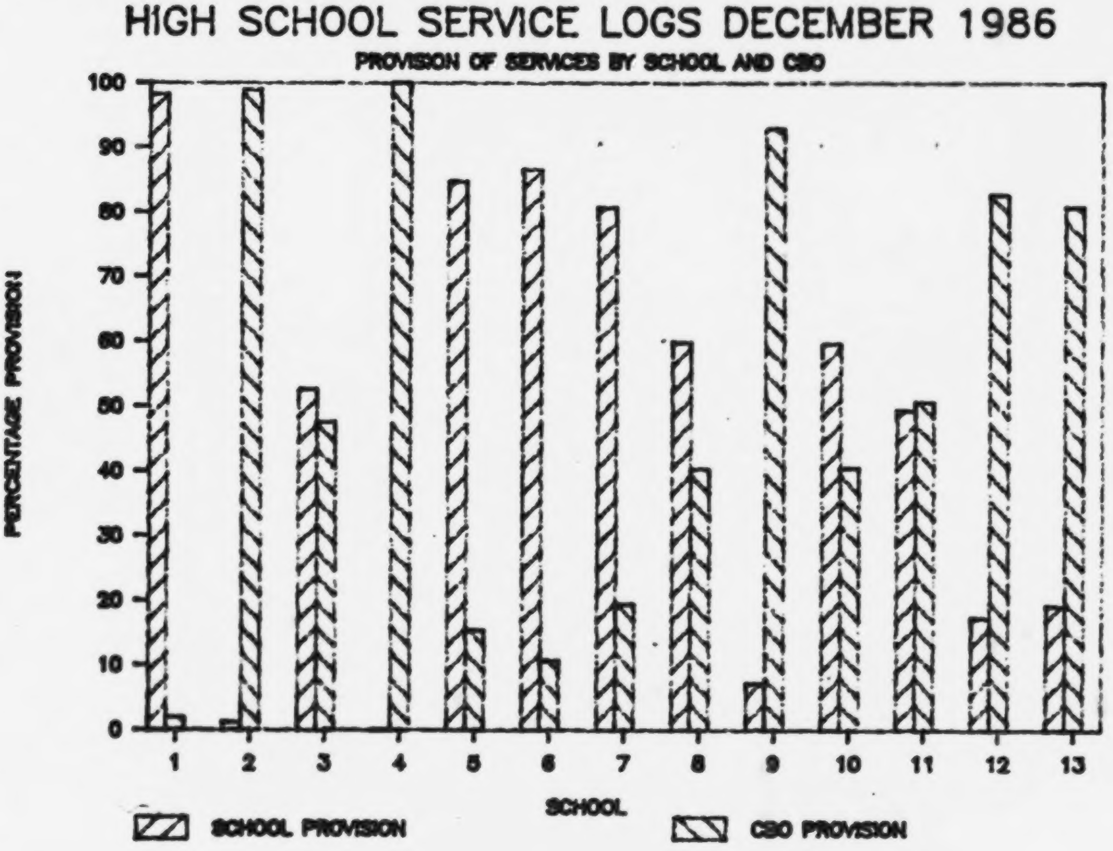
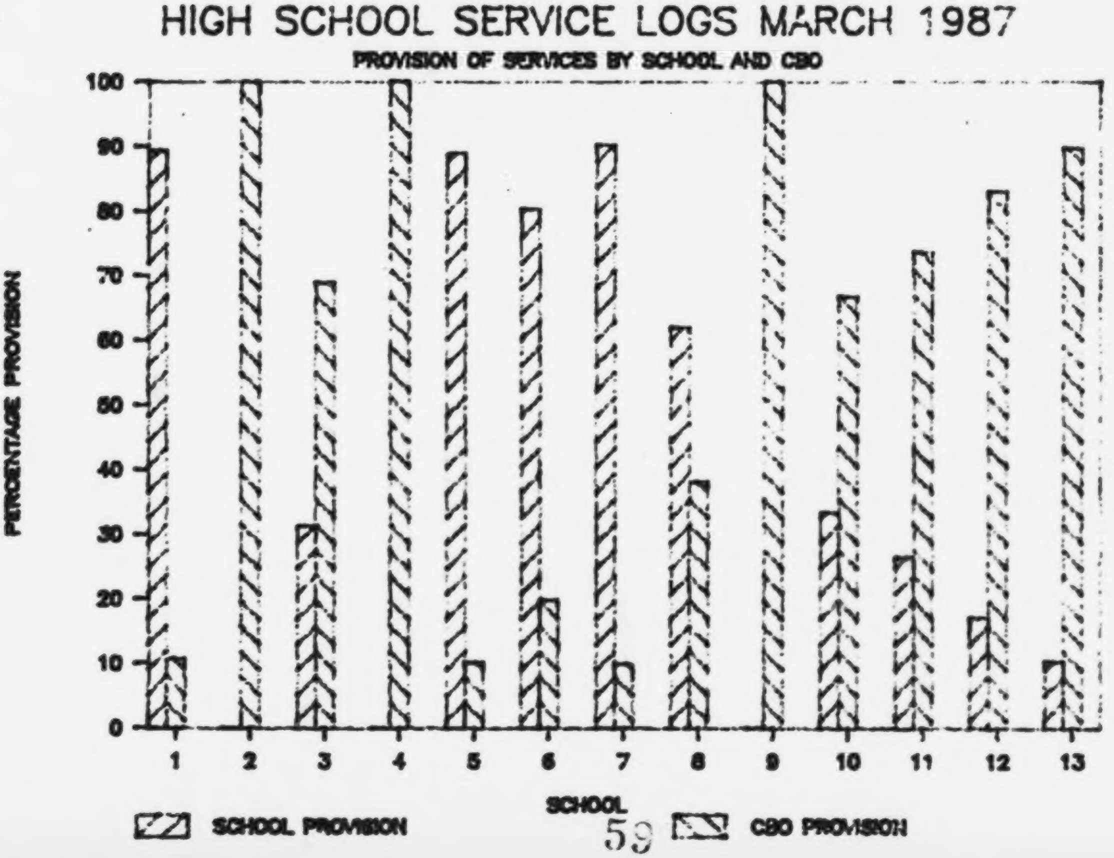


Figure 3-4

Provision of Services by School and CBO





report over the whole school year. In order to facilitate this task we have arranged to collect data in only six high schools, and for only forty students in each of those schools. Each group of forty students comprises thirty-two drawn randomly from the school's target list or, in one case, from the entire school roster; four students selected by the school as being among those with whom they think they are working well; and four students who are part of our longitudinal study. Furthermore, providers are asked to report on a weekly basis, indicating as and when a contact is made, what is its focus, who initiated it and whether it was brief or long - much the same information as was sought in 1986-87. Other studies have shown that weekly reporting over the period of a year produces sufficient variations between individuals and between programs.

Chapter Four

PROGRAM OUTCOMES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE, 1986-87

Introduction

This chapter will address six general questions:

How successful were the DPI schools in meeting the Chancellor's objectives for dropout prevention in 1986-87?

Which individual schools and which service givers, school and/or CBO, had the strongest impact on students after controlling for students' initial characteristics?

What outcomes resulted for students with different initial characteristics?

What differences were there between the various programs or models implemented in 1986-87?

How did the performance of targeted students in the DPI compare with the performance of students who were not targeted for dropout prevention services?

What school-wide outcomes were there for schools that participated in the Dropout Prevention Initiative?

Our ability to answer most of these questions from Year Two data is seriously compromised by the fact that the program rosters tended to include most or all of the students who had been targeted for services since September in eight of the schools (the "uncleared" lists), but only the students who were still in active status as of midyear or even later in five of the schools (the "cleared" lists). This matter has been discussed in detail in Chapter Two, but will need to be reiterated at various points in order to qualify the findings that we present.

As has also been discussed in Chapter Two, most of the students representing the "pure CBO" model from the three AIDP schools that are included in this evaluation for comparison purposes come from just one of the three schools. For this reason, and to make clear the findings for the Dropout Prevention Program as such, results will be presented separately for the 10 DPP schools in certain sections. Where results are presented for the three AIDP schools, this will be done in the context of other data that throw light on questions about the different models.

There is a final caveat about the findings. Chapter Three reported a variety of information about students' length of stay in the program and their participation in different program activities. In that chapter, we noted that we were unable to identify the type and frequency of program services each individual student received. Because of this, we cannot ascertain the kinds of services and frequency of intervention which are associated with positive or negative student outcomes. One proxy for this kind of analysis is to determine whether the length of time a student was part of the program had any impact on his/her performance. That question will be addressed later in this chapter. The more substantial question about particular services will be a significant part of the Year Three evaluation.

Before proceeding to the findings, it is important to state what we might expect to find. From a first perspective, because 1986-87 was only the second year of a very complex program, one cannot yet expect the program to have accomplished its ultimate goals. Planning for the second year did not even have the benefit of program-wide results and feedback from the first year. On the other hand, several other dropout prevention programs currently being implemented in major cities (Chicago, Los Angeles, Rochester) have shown some positive gains even from their first or second years. However, the DPP as a whole is considerably larger than its counterparts in other cities.

The New York City Dropout Prevention Program in the middle schools has not so far produced gains in the program overall, but positive results have appeared in a few schools, and these results have suggested some directions for change. The level at which to expect gains to materialize in the DPP high school program might be units within programs within schools. Only the data collection for Year Three will be sensitive enough to the specific activities students are participating in to enable us to measure gains at this level. Thus the most that might emerge from the Year Two evaluation is that something positive is going on in the program or in one or another school or set of schools.

A second perspective on expected outcomes focuses not just on the program but also on the students themselves. Even while the comparison of schools and models is very constrained for Year Two, it is possible that some meaningful patterns will emerge for different kinds of students across the various schools and models. Findings related to students' age, sex, grade, and so on, may help sort out which students are most at risk, and which students seem to be succeeding the most in the program. These will be reported below. Further, a number of DPP staff have argued that the results of the program depend on a student's being in the program for a considerable length of time. It has been said repeatedly that students are just beginning to respond to the program toward the end of the spring semester, or that students in a second year of the program begin to show gains that could not be observed in their first year. Another major school system, Montgomery County, Md., has recently reported that, after failing to obtain gains by comparing program outcomes for successive cohorts of students at risk, they are finding gains by looking at a given cohort longitudinally. In the longitudinal study to be conducted for the Year Three final report, we will look at students' progress over more than one year's duration. Prior to that, some overall program gain still might be expected in Year Two compared to Year One if students in Year Two were responding to the program more positively than these same students did in Year One.

A third perspective is whether our observations of the Dropout Prevention Program have led us to expect it to result in positive gains. Our Interim Report for Year Two was deliberately ambiguous on this score. It stated that the program in Year Two was "being carried out as intended, and thus that the stage is set to find out how the services affect students, specifically how they influence dropping out." We have raised a number of questions in both the first and the second years about the adequacy of the scope and intensity of the DPP. Our attention has turned additionally to how the program is developed and carried out, especially to the development of the DPP staff and how they relate to other staff of the schools and to the students, their families, and the community. From both of these points of view, we do not expect to see a substantial change in student outcomes until the dropout prevention effort spreads widely in the schools and the schools become fully accountable for their results with students. We present our findings in the hope that they will contribute information to this process.

The Chancellor's Objectives

The objectives for the high schools in the Dropout Prevention Initiative were the same in 1986-87 as those for the previous year, 1985-86:

a. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will have 1986-87 attendance that is better than 1985-86.

b. A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will pass at least one more subject in 1986-87 than they did in 1985-86. (This applies only to participating students who failed one or more subjects during the previous year.)

c. A minimum of 50 percent of the high school students provided with dropout prevention services will earn sufficient credits to advance to the next highest grade.

d. Starting with 1985-86 as a baseline year, a minimum of 50 percent of the students, ninth grade or below, provided with dropout prevention services will still be in school three years later.

These objectives will be taken up here in this order.

Attendance Change. The average daily attendance in 1986-87 for targeted students in the 10 DPP high schools was 64%. The average attendance of these same students in 1985-86 had been 72%. For those students for whom data are available for both years, attendance dropped eight percent (-8%) between 1985-86 and 1986-87. (See Table 4-1.) These statistics are based on the DPP evaluation sample of 1483 students, 72% of whom have data in both years. For the full Year Two roster of 3418 DPP targeted students, 71% of whom have data in both years, we also found an attendance loss of eight percent (-8%). These very similar findings confirm the reliability of the evaluation sample for various analyses to be reported below. However, since the full rosters and evaluation samples of some of the schools had both been cleared of inactive and discharged students, the outcomes must be viewed as biased in a positive direction.

As reported in the Final Report for Year One, in Year One of the DPP, 1985-86, the average attendance of targeted students in the ten high schools was 63%, compared to their prior year attendance of 72% in 1984-85. For the students for whom data were available in both years, the attendance loss in Year One was ten percent (-10%). For the schools whose Year Two lists were uncleared, the average change score for Year One was minus nine percent (-9%). The average change for these had been schools for Year Two was minus eleven percent (-11%). For the schools whose Year Two lists were cleared, the change for Year One had been minus twelve percent (-12%) and the change for Year Two was minus six percent (-6%). In short, it was only the schools with cleared lists that showed a reduction in attendance loss between the Year One and Year Two evaluations.

Table 4-1 also shows the average attendance in 1985-86 and 1986-87 and the average attendance change between these two years for the students for whom data from both years were available, for each of the ten DPP high schools. The schools with cleared and uncleared lists are shown separately so as to furnish a context for interpreting some of the differences between the schools.

The third panel of Table 4-1 shows attendance scores for the students served only by the CBO in the three AIDP schools, and then adds these scores to those for the ten DPP schools to arrive at the results for the entire Dropout Prevention Initiative (DPI). Recalling the discussion on student samples from Chapter Two, it is noted here that these students are only a subset of all AIDP students in these schools, especially in School 2 and School 9. The final panel of Table 4-1 shows attendance scores for the other AIDP students -- the school-with-CBO model. This latter group is used in the DPI evaluation as a comparison model.

In the ten DPP schools overall, thirty-five percent (35%) of the students improved their attendance between 1985-86 and 1986-87. Table 4-2 shows this result and the percentage of improvement for each of the individual schools. The results are shown separately for cleared and uncleared schools. In none of the schools individually did the program meet the Chancellor's objective of at least 50% of the students improving their attendance. Schools 5 and 7, both with 41% of targeted students, had the highest rates of attendance improvement among the schools

TABLE 4-1

Change in Attendance for Targeted Students
DPI High Schools, 1986-87
[Evaluation Sample]

School Code	Average 1985-86 Attendance	Average 1986-87 Attendance	Average Change	(N)*
DPP Schools with uncleared lists; avg. change = -10.5%				
3	69.9%	62.1%	-10.1%	(110)
10	57.3%	48.1%	-12.7%	(85)
11	70.9%	59.3%	-11.9%	(144)
12	67.8%	58.7%	-10.1%	(123)
13	78.7%	73.7%	- 7.1%	(86)
DPP Schools with cleared lists; avg. change = -5.6%				
1	81.3%	73.2%	- 5.8%	(84)
5	73.7%	69.1%	- 5.1%	(123)
6	71.1%	69.4%	- 2.6%	(75)
7	68.9%	60.0%	- 8.1%	(108)
8	74.2%	68.6%	- 5.7%	(123)
Total DPP	71.5%	63.9%	- 8.1%	(1061)
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO Schools; avg. change = -22.8%				
2	66.6%	40.6%	-33.7%	(15)
4	66.1%	44.3%	-22.1%	(104)
9	67.3%	61.7%	-12.3%	(8)
TOTAL DPI	70.8%	61.9%	- 9.7%	(1188)
AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison Model; avg. change = -6.9%				
2	65.4%	54.6%	-12.3%	(388)
4	75.8%	75.0%	- 0.6%	(348)
9	67.3%	61.9%	- 7.5%	(191)

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* Change scores are computed only for students with data for both years.

TABLE 4-2

Targeted Students Who Had Attendance Gains in 1986-87
DPP High Schools, 1986-87
[Evaluation Sample]

School Code	N*	# of Students with Attendance Improvement	% of Total	Average Attendance Gain of Improvers
DPP Schools with uncleared lists				
3	110	36	32.7%	8.5%
10	85	24	28.2%	12.1%
11	144	47	32.6%	11.2%
12	123	40	32.5%	11.9%
13	86	26	30.2%	12.1%
DPP Schools with cleared lists				
1	84	28	33.3%	10.4%
5	123	50	40.7%	10.8%
6	75	26	34.7%	19.7%
7	108	44	40.7%	12.5%
8	123	45	36.6%	12.0%
Total DPP	1061	366	34.5%	11.6%
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO Schools				
2	15	1	6.7%	5.5%
4	104	25	24.0%	9.3%
9	8	4	50.0%	5.1%
TOTAL DPI	1188	396	33.3%	11.4%
AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison Model				
2	388	119	30.7%	17.2%
4	348	173	49.7%	13.8%
9	191	79	41.4%	12.5%
Total	927	371	40.0%	14.6%

with cleared lists, both with 41% of their program students showing improvement. The remainder of the cleared schools and all but one of the uncleared schools had attendance improvement rates between 30% and 37%, while School 10, with an uncleared list, had an improvement rate of 28%. An analysis to be presented below (see section on "Students with different prior attendance rates") will show that in general it was students whose 1985-86 attendance was the highest who lost the most in 1986-87 attendance. Students who had been absent the most had the least further loss of attendance, if they continued in school -- though they were also the most likely to be discharged as dropouts, in which case complete attendance data were less likely to be found. Table 4-2 also shows the proportion of students who improved their attendance in the AIDP pure CBO model and the AIDP school-with-CBO comparison model. Only the latter group in School 4 met the Chancellor's objective (School 9's pure-CBO sample is too small to consider.)

Courses passed. Findings for the Year Two evaluation sample in the 10 DPP high schools are shown in Table 4-3. For these students, the average rate of subjects passed in 1986-87 was 42% and in 1985-86 had been 46%. Students for whom we have data from both years lost an average of seven percent (-7%) in courses passed. (For the full roster of all targeted students, the courses passed change was minus six percent (-6%). However, course data for both years are available for only 55% of full roster students, while 77% of the students in the evaluation sample have these data.)

Table 4-3 also reports the Year Two courses passed results for the AIDP pure-CBO model and the school-with-CBO model. The change in courses passed for students in the pure-CBO model was -7%, not much different from the score for DPP students. However, students in the AIDP school-with-CBO model showed a markedly stronger outcome, with a gain in courses passed of +1.1% (of course, this is still not enough to ensure that these students graduate). This finding will be discussed in a later section.

In Year One of the Dropout Prevention Initiative, the average student passed 35% of courses in 1985-86, had passed 37% of courses in the prior year, 1984-85, and in the subsample that had data for both years lost nine percent (-9%) of courses between Year One and the prior year. For the schools whose Year Two lists were cleared, the change in Year One was minus eleven percent (-11%). In Year Two itself, the change for these schools was minus four percent (-4%). The schools whose Year Two lists were not cleared had a change of minus five percent (-5%) in Year One and a change of minus nine percent (-9%) in Year Two. As with attendance, the schools with uncleared lists had a greater loss in courses passed in Year Two than in Year One, while the reduced loss in courses passed among the schools with cleared lists might be partly explained in terms of the clearing itself.

In 1986-87, Year Two, forty-three percent (43%) of those

TABLE 4-3

Change in Courses Passed for Targeted Students in DPP High Schools, 1986-87
[Evaluation Sample]

School Code	Average % Courses Passed in 1985-86	Average % Courses Passed in 1986-87	Average Change	(N)*
DPP Schools with uncleared lists; avg. change = -7.2%				
3	40.7%	37.7%	- 7.9%	(110)
10	27.6%	21.4%	-10.9%	(99)
11	49.3%	42.1%	-10.9%	(131)
12	40.8%	34.6%	-6.9%	(135)
13	53.2%	46.9%	-9.4%	(49)
DPP Schools with cleared lists; avg. change = -4.7%				
1	65.2%	58.9%	-6.5%	(127)
5	50.6%	50.8%	-3.0%	(92)
6	43.9%	40.7%	-4.9%	(110)
7	45.6%	41.8%	-4.0%	(128)
8	45.6%	39.0%	-4.7%	(128)
Total DPP	45.8%	41.5%	-6.8%	(1109)
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO Schools; avg. change = -10.5%				
2	34.6%	39.3%	-10.4%	(10)
4	29.8%	26.0%	-10.7%	(50)
9	51.2%	32.6%	-9.4%	(11)
TOTAL DPI	44.5%	40.0%	-7.0%	(1180)
AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison Model; avg. change = +1.1%				
2	31.3%	31.5%	-2.0%	(385)
4	43.1%	54.9%	+9.9%	(310)
9	44.1%	39.5%	-5.6%	(223)

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* Change scores are computed only for students with data for both years.

students in the ten DPP high schools who had failed at least one course in the prior year improved their percent of courses passed. Table 4-4 shows the overall result, and percent of students who improved for each of the individual high schools. The Chancellor's goal of 50% of students who had previously failed a course now improving in courses passed was met in the cleared schools by School 7 (50%) and virtually by School 5 (49.4%). The average gain in courses was 34% in School 7, 20% in school 5, and was 38% in School 6, where 44% of the students in question gained in courses passed. Among the uncleared schools, School 12 (50%) met the Chancellor's goal. In School 10, 45% of the students with a previous fail gained in courses passed. In School 3, 41% improved, with an average gain of 33% of courses.

In further analyses to be reported below, we have been able to compare attendance and courses passed findings for DPP targeted students with findings for students in other samples. Since these comparisons involve only the subset of DPP students whose prior year attendance meets the criteria used to select the comparison groups, they are best dealt with separately.

Promotions. Promotions at the end of the 1986-87 school year cannot be reliably inferred from the data currently available to Teachers College. The proportion of students promoted from one grade to the next will be addressed in the longitudinal study to be included in the Year Three Final Report.

Students still in school; dropouts. The retention of students over the three-year period of 1985-86 through 1987-88 will also be addressed in the Year Three Final Report. Here we only report data on student persistence in school during 1986-87.

Thirteen percent (13%) of the full roster of targeted students in the ten DPP schools in 1986-87 were discharged as dropouts during the year. The percent was higher for the uncleared schools (17%) than for the cleared schools (7%), except for School 12 (3%), which had a particularly strong policy of discharging as few targeted students as possible from the DPP targeted list. The percent of students dropping out over longer periods of time will be examined in the longitudinal study to be included in the Year Three Final Report.

An analysis to be presented at a later point in this report has found that the percentage of DPP targeted students who were discharged as dropouts in 1986-87 was substantially lower than similarly at-risk students who were not targeted for services in DPP or AIDP schools. While the clearing issue disrupts a comparison between the models within the DPP, the magnitude of the difference between DPP targeted students and non-targeted students eclipses this issue. Whether the students who are not discharged improve their performance in school, or whether the dropping out process is simply prolonged for them, is a question that will be addressed in the same analysis.

TABLE 4-4

Targeted Students Who Had Gains in Courses Passed in 1986-87
DPP High Schools
[Evaluation Sample]

School Code	N*	# of Students with 1+ Failures in 85-86	# of Students with Gains in Courses Passed	% of Students with Prior Failures	Average Gain in Proportion of Courses Passed
DPP Schools with uncleared lists					
3	152	42	17	40.5%	33.4%
10	144	51	23	45.1%	24.4%
11	157	90	29	32.2%	22.6%
12	148	84	42	50.0%	16.1%
13	142	37	11	29.7%	24.1%
DPP Schools with cleared lists					
1	148	59	25	42.4%	27.4%
5	150	81	40	49.4%	20.1%
6	136	75	33	44.0%	37.8%
7	148	82	41	50.0%	34.2%
8	158	82	33	40.2%	26.4%
Total DPP	1483	683	294	43.0%	26.3%
DPI-AIDP Pure-CBO Schools					
2	28	3	1	33.3%	24.7%
4	153	19	5	26.3%	27.6%
9	20	6	2	33.3%	18.4%
TOTAL DPI	1684	711	302	42.5%	26.3%
AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison Model					
2		240	102	42.5%	36.9%
4		156	94	60.3%	34.1%
9		114	58	50.9%	39.6%

Regression Analyses

In order to control for the effects of student background characteristics and program variables on outcomes for attendance and courses passed, we analyzed data using multiple regression techniques. These analyses are described in detail in Appendix 1.

In general, students' prior performance was found to be a strong predictor of 1986-87 attendance and courses passed. One school (School 10) had the lowest outcomes, after controlling for the effects of prior performance, but there were no schools who had unqualified positive effects on student performance. The length of time a student was in the program had a slight positive association with outcomes, but this result is intertwined with a survivor effect: most students who remain in school do better, whether or not they have a special program. (This issue will be discussed shortly.) Finally, after controlling for prior performance and school attended, it was found that students receiving CBO services only had slightly better 1986-87 attendance than other students, while students receiving school services only did very slightly better on courses passed.

Outcomes for Students in the Community-Based Organizations

Table 4-5 presents average attendance and courses passed rates and change scores for students in the fourteen CBO programs in the high schools. Average 1986-87 attendance varied from 60% for students in the Grand Street Settlement program, to 81% for students overall in the Victim Services/Project SMART program. (The latter figure is not surprising, given that the student mediators listed on the Project SMART rosters were not necessarily drawn from an at-risk population, by design.) The average proportion of courses passed in 1986-87 ranged from just 27% for students in the Grand Street program and in the Pius XII program, to 77% overall for the students in the three Victim Services programs.

Table 4-6 shows attendance outcomes for students receiving services from school personnel only, from CBO personnel only, and from a combination of the two. Table 4-7 is a similar presentation of courses passed outcomes. All CBOs operating in a single school have been grouped together. All thirteen schools are represented in these tables; the AIDP school-with-CBO comparison model is included in this particular analysis as part of the Dropout Prevention Initiative.

Overall, students in the CBO-only component had the lowest average prior attendance (59%), followed by students in the school-only component (60%) and students served both by school and CBO personnel (65%). However, these aggregate scores are affected by uneven sample sizes in the different schools. In six of the thirteen schools (including all schools with uncleared lists), students in the school-only component had the lowest prior attendance, while the CBO-only students had the lowest

Table 4-5

Outcomes for Students in Community-Based Organization Programs DPI High Schools, 1986-87

		---- ATTENDANCE ----			--- COURSES PASSED ---		
School/CBO	N*	85-86	86-87	Change	85-86	86-87	Change
CBOs Overall	2689	71.6%	64.6%	-7.2	44.1%	40.2%	-5.2
School 1							
NWBronx	55	72.0%	60.8%	-6.4	46.6%	42.3%	-5.9
Proj. SMART	27	88.6%	80.4%	-7.2	81.1%	80.1%	-1.9
School 2/							
Op. Success	15	66.6%	40.6%	-33.7%	34.6%	37.6%	-10.4%
School 3							
Op. Success	197	68.8%	61.5%	-9.8	36.6%	37.6%	-6.2
Proj. SMART	9	91.0%	91.3%	0.2	90.9%	74.6%	-12.7
School 4/							
Op. Success	104	66.1%	44.3%	-22.1%	29.8%	13.8%	-10.7%
School 5							
St. John	33	76.8%	77.3%	-0.3	46.3%	37.2%	-0.9
Green Chimney	66	72.5%	72.7%	-2.4	52.5%	55.6%	-6.1
School 6							
Pius XII	63	68.9%	60.6%	-1.7	45.2%	26.9%	-17.4
School 7							
Good Shepherd	35	59.2%	57.1%	-8.1	39.7%	38.1%	-5.1
OutThere Prod.	(only one student reported on roster)						
School 8							
Aspira	131	82.1%	71.5%	-5.7	51.6%	43.5%	-0.5
Op. Futures	277	72.3%	66.0%	-6.3	39.5%	40.6%	0.0
Urban Advent.	45	78.8%	77.1%	-4.7	53.7%	41.5%	-10.6
Proj. SMART	(no data given)						
School 9/							
Op. Success	8	67.3%	61.7%	-12.3%	51.2%	50.4%	-9.4%
School 10							
Grand Street	60	69.4%	60.4%	-11.7	36.0%	27.1%	-9.3
School 11							
Op. Success	283	67.4%	58.3%	-8.9	46.7%	38.1%	-9.1
School 12							
Op. Success	145	67.3%	58.9%	-9.6	41.0%	34.5%	-7.2
Proj. SMART	(no data given)						
School 13							
Op. Success	87	77.5%	73.1%	-3.7	46.1%	47.7%	-3.6

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* N=students for whom attendance change scores were available. Due to missing data, the calculations for each column are based on slightly different groups of students.

TABLE 4-6

Change in Attendance
for Students Participating in School and/or CBO Program Components
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

	Avg. 1986-87 Attendance			Average Change over 1985-86					
School Code	School Only	School & CBO	CBO Only	School Only	(N)	School & CBO	(N)	CBO Only	(N)
Entire DPI		62%				-8.3	(3470)		
Total by Column	60%	65%	59%	-8.5%	(1358)	-6.6%	(1373)	-11.0%	(739)
Schools with uncleared lists									
3	53%	--	63%	**		--		-9.3%	(141)
10	42%	61%	58%	-14.4%	(102)	-11.3%	(34)	**	
11	51%	--	58%	-12.4%	(463)	--		-8.9%	(243)
12	47%	--	59%	-22.8%	(7)	--		-9.6%	(119)
13	71%	--	73%	-10.4%	(55)	--		-3.7%	(61)
Schools with cleared lists									
1	79%	89%	66%	-5.7%	(36)	+0.7%	(7)	-7.2%	(42)
5	70%	74%	59%	-3.3%	(296)	-1.4%	(64)	-25.4%	(3)
6	69%	61%	--	-5.0%	(215)	-1.7%	(19)	--	
7	60%	57%	79%	-9.2%	(94)	-8.1%	(26)	**	
8	77%	69%	76%	-4.7%	(23)	-6.1%	(362)	**	
AIDP Schools (both pure-CBO and school-with-CBO models)									
2	62%	54%	41%	-3.0%	(56)	-13.9%	(332)	-33.7%	(15)
4	72%	75%	44%	-18.8%	(4)	-0.4%	(344)	-22.1%	(104)
9	55%	62%	62%	-9.0%	(6)	-7.4%	(185)	-12.3%	(8)

** Sample size is too small to report

TABLE 4-7

Change in Courses Passed for Students Participating in School and/or CBO Program Components DPI High Schools, 1986-87

	Avg. % Courses Passed in 1986-87			Average Change over 1985-86					
School Code	School Only	School & CBO	CBO Only	School Only	(N)	School & CBO	(N)	CBO Only	(N)
Entire DPI	--------	40%	---------	--------	------	-8.3	(3470)	--------	------
Total by Column	40%	42%	38%	-6.5%	(922)	-2.2%	(1306)	- 7.9%	(626)
Schools with uncleared lists									
3	44%	--	40%	+0.6%	(5)	--		- 6.6%	(124)
10	21%	27%	22%	-8.7%	(100)	-9.2%	(39)	**	
11	36%	--	38%	-9.3%	(344)	--		- 9.1%	(210)
12	35%	--	35%	-0.1%	(5)	--		- 6.9%	(132)
13	46%	--	48%	-14.0%	(27)	--		- 3.6%	(22)
Schools with cleared lists									
1	61%	87%	53%	-11.0%	(57)	+3.0%	(9)	- 4.7%	(62)
5	53%	46%	26%	-1.3%	(76)	-3.1%	(14)	**	
6	34%	27%	--	-3.6%	(99)	-17.4%	(16)	--	
7	40%	38%	--	-4.4%	(109)	-5.1%	(31)	--	
8	58%	42%	36%	-5.9%	(31)	-10.0%	(348)	**	
AIDP Schools (both pure-CBO and school-with-CBO models)									
2	42%	30%	38%	+6.0%	(60)	-3.5%	(325)	-10.4%	(10)
4	44%	55%	14%	**		+10.0%	(308)	-10.7%	(50)
9	26%	40%	51%	-20.6%	(7)	-5.1%	(216)	+9.4%	(11)

** Sample size is too small to report

scores in only four schools (including two AIDP schools).

Perhaps surprisingly, given their low average prior attendance, CBO-only students also had the greatest attendance loss (-11%). The average change for school-only students was -8.5% and for students served both by school and CBO personnel was -6.6%. Among the individual schools, school-only students had the highest loss scores in virtually all of the schools with uncleared lists, and CBO-only students had the lowest change scores in five of the thirteen schools (including all three AIDP schools). Only one program component in one school was found to have a positive attendance change: the students served both by school and CBO personnel in School 1 (a school with a cleared list) had average prior attendance of 89% and showed a gain in attendance of 0.7% (N=7).

CBO-only students also had the lowest average proportion of prior year courses passed, 38%, compared to 40% for school-only students and 42% for students served by school and CBO personnel. The range in variation here is only four percentage points, just slightly smaller than the range of six points on prior year attendance. Average prior year courses passed scores were lowest for CBO-only students in five of the thirteen high schools, and were lowest for school-only students in four of the thirteen high schools.

Both CBO-only students and school-only students overall showed greater declines in proportion of courses passed (-7.9% and -6.5%, respectively) than students served by both school and CBO personnel (-2.2%). Within individual schools, however, there was no clear trend of one component having greater or lesser success than another. The greatest loss scores were obtained for school-only students in four schools, for CBO-only students in four schools, and for combined-service students in five schools.

Four groups showed positive changes in proportion of courses passed. The students receiving both school and CBO services in School 1 had a prior year courses passed rate of 87%, and showed a gain of 3% (N=9). Students served by the school only in School 2, an AIDP school, had a prior year rate of 42% and showed an average gain of 6% (N=60). Students served both by school and CBO personnel in School 4, another AIDP school, had a prior year rate of 55% and gain of 10%, while a small number of students (N=11) served by the CBO only in School 9, again an AIDP school, showed a prior year rate of 51% and a gain of 9.4%.

Regression analyses were performed to determine the relative effects of participation in school-sponsored, CBO-sponsored, or combined program services on student performance. After controlling for the effects of students' prior year performance, length of time in the program, and school attended, we found that the portion of the dropout prevention program in which the student participated (i.e., school, CBO, or combined services) had a very small but statistically significant effect on their 1986-87 attendance, and an even smaller effect on courses passed that was not statistically significant. The average 1986-87 attendance for students receiving CBO services only was about eleven percentage points lower than for students receiving combined services, and four points lower than for students receiving school services only. The proportion of courses passed in 1986-87 by students receiving only CBO services was about thirteen percentage points lower than for students receiving school services only, and ten points lower than for students receiving combined services.

Results for Students with Different Characteristics

In these analyses we are attempting to identify groups of students with whom the Dropout Prevention Initiative was more or less successful.

Outcomes for students meeting different eligibility criteria. As we discussed in Chapter Two, students were selected for participation in the Dropout Prevention Initiative on the basis of one or more selection criteria. For each category of eligibility, we have compared the attendance and courses passed outcomes of students who were reported as having met the eligibility criterion with students who were reported as not having met the criterion (thus excluding those students for whom no information was given or for whom it was reported "don't know"). The students were drawn from the full rosters of the ten DPP schools only; however, for the most part, only the students in the evaluation sample had data on selection criteria.

The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4-8. Several findings are worth mention. The average loss in attendance from 1985-86 to 1986-87 for students selected for the program on the basis of having 40 or more prior year absences was somewhat less than the attendance loss for students who did not meet this criterion: -7% vs. -10%. This can be partly explained as regression to the mean. The average attendance loss for students selected on the basis of the other attendance criterion -- 20 or more absences in Spring, 1986 -- was virtually the same as the loss for students not meeting that criterion: -9% vs. -8%.

Only a small number of students (N=67) were identified as having met the criterion of long-term absentee (LTA) in 1985-86 with ten or more days present in the fall of 1986-87. Of the students with complete data, the loss in attendance for the former LTAs was -9%, compared to -7% for non-LTAs. (The former LTAs, however, had average rates of prior year and outcome year attendance that were about 20 points lower than for non-LTAs.)

Students who were selected for the program because they had been eligible the prior year (1985-86) but were no longer attendance-eligible in 1986-87 did have slightly higher rates of prior attendance than other students: 73% vs. 70% (curiously, an attendance rate of 73% would still make a student eligible for the program, since it would amount to 49 absences). These

Table 4-8

Outcomes for Students Meeting Different Program Eligibility Criteria*
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

Eligibility Criteria	Average 1985-86 Attendance	(N)	Average 1986-87 Attendance	(N)	Average Attendance Change	(N)	1985-86 % Courses Passed	(N)	1986-87 % Courses Passed	(N)	Change in Courses Passed	(N)
40+ abs. 85-86												
Studs. mtg. crit.	59.0%	(614)	52.1%	(724)	- 6.8%	(598)	30.6%	(610)	31.1%	(583)	- 1.7%	(524)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	85.2	(490)	4.9	(644)	- 9.9	(476)	61.0	(587)	50.5	(624)	-10.9	(546)
20+ abs. Sp.85-86												
Studs. mtg. crit.	62.8	(771)	53.7	(878)	- 8.9	(745)	35.8	(790)	33.4	(742)	- 4.8	(673)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	84.1	(442)	76.5	(574)	- 7.6	(431)	59.8	(521)	52.4	(554)	- 8.4	(484)
LTA 85-86 with 10+ days present Fall 86												
Studs. mtg. crit.	54.7	(54)	44.9	(63)	- 9.4	(49)	28.4	(50)	20.2	(52)	- 8.5	(45)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	73.3	(483)	67.0	(605)	- 6.9	(466)	45.8	(560)	42.7	(582)	- 5.7	(506)
Elig. DPI 85-86 but no longer elig.												
Studs. mtg. crit.	73.2	(315)	68.3	(453)	- 4.8	(305)	48.3	(197)	44.2	(204)	- 3.9	(182)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	69.8	(365)	61.2	(463)	- 9.2	(362)	43.2	(461)	37.1	(415)	- 8.4	(398)
At-risk referral												
Studs. mtg. crit.	74.1	(329)	68.0	(529)	- 4.9	(315)	50.3	(238)	43.4	(268)	- 6.8	(217)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	70.2	(366)	61.2	(431)	- 9.3	(351)	41.3	(390)	37.2	(400)	- 7.2	(342)
Failed 3+ courses due to cutting												
Studs. mtg. crit.	73.1	(505)	65.6	(649)	- 7.3	(487)	37.3	(421)	36.8	(402)	- 3.4	(364)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	70.5	(294)	63.8	(372)	- 8.1	(281)	50.6	(331)	42.9	(357)	- 9.4	(304)
OS only, 10+ abs. in 2 months 86-87												
Studs. mtg. crit.	81.6	(41)	67.2	(56)	-15.0	(39)	57.3	(40)	39.2	(55)	-16.2	(37)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	69.9	(328)	62.2	(380)	- 8.8	(314)	40.8	(338)	38.9	(349)	- 6.7	(296)
Sp. Ed. Students												
Studs. mtg. crit.	83.6	(7)	73.5	(7)	-10.1	(7)	71.7	(3)	69.3	(5)	+14.4	(2)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	70.9	(420)	62.7	(508)	- 9.0	(404)	42.9	(459)	39.2	(474)	- 6.8	(406)
Meets no criterion												
Studs. mtg. crit.	88.9	(30)	89.2	(43)	- 0.4	(29)	78.7	(40)	78.7	(42)	+ 1.5	(38)
Studs. not mtg. crit.	70.4	(642)	62.3	(764)	- 8.8	(620)	44.1	(719)	39.8	(719)	- 7.2	(638)

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* This analysis is based on students in the full program rosters in the ten DPP high schools only; AIDP students are not included. Generally, data were available only for the full roster students who were also in the evaluation sample.

students had an average attendance loss of -5%, compared to -9% for other students. This finding suggests that there is still a need to maintain intervention services for students who had shown some prior improvement.

Students who were "at-risk referrals" to the program were comparable to this last group: their prior attendance was 74% compared to 70% for other students, and their attendance loss was -5% compared to -9% for other students. Again, such students do appear to be in need of some form of support to maintain or increase their school performance.

The attendance of students selected for the program because they failed three or more classes due to cutting declined by about the same percent as other students: -7% vs. -8%. The few students (N=61) who were enrolled in Operation Success programs because they were absent 10 or more days during two consecutive months in 1986-87 had prior year attendance that was higher than that for other students: 82% vs. 70%, and their attendance loss was much greater: -15% compared to -9% for other students.

Finally, the few students in the program who were listed as having met no criteria (N=44) did have higher average prior year attendance than other students (88% compared to 70%), and also experienced much smaller losses in attendance (-.4% compared to -9%). This is a considerably lower loss than would be expected for previously high attenders, and it suggests that the program was effective with these students.

In terms of the courses passed outcome, students selected on the basis of their prior year attendance had prior year courses passed rates that were much lower than other students, but these students had smaller losses in courses passed in 1986-87. Students selected because of 40+ prior year absences had an average courses passed rate of 31%, compared to 61% for other students. They experienced only a two percent (-2%) drop in courses passed, however, compared to a change of -11% for other students. Some of this might be attributable to regression toward the mean, since these students in effect had nowhere to go but up. Students chosen on the basis of 20+ Spring, 1986, absences had a prior year courses passed rate of 36%, compared to 60% for other students; they had a -5% drop in courses passed, compared to -8% for other students. Former LTAs enrolled in the program had courses passed losses that were greater than for other students: -9% vs. -6%; their prior year rates were also much lower: 28% vs. 46%.

Students who were enrolled in the program because they had been eligible in 1985-86 but were no longer attendance-eligible had 1985-86 courses passed rates that were similar to other students: 48% vs. 43%. These students did have relatively more success in their classes, with a -4% loss in courses passed compared to -8% for other students. As with the findings on attendance for these students, the evidence suggests that these students still need intervention services, or that school is still alienating these students. Students who were at-risk referrals passed half of their prior year courses, compared to 41% for other students, and experienced the same degree of change in courses passed over the two years: -7%.

Students who met the eligibility criterion of three or more course failures due to cutting had an average prior year courses passed rate of only 37%, compared to 51% for other students. These students lost only three percent (-3%) in courses passed, compared to a -9% loss for other students. Again, this may reflect regression toward the mean.

In parallel with their attendance outcomes, students who were enrolled in Operation Success because of 10+ absences in two months during 1986-87 had prior year courses passed rates, on average, of 39%, identical to that for other students. These students, however, had a -16% drop in courses passed, compared to a -7% drop for other students.

Finally, students enrolled in the program who were identified as having met no eligibility criterion passed a higher proportion of their courses in 1985-86: 79% vs. 44% for other students. They also were the only group to show a gain in proportion of courses passed: +1.5% compared to -7% for other students.

Students in different grades. For the remaining analyses in this section on students with different characteristics, the sample consists of all of the targeted students in the evaluation sample for the thirteen DPI high schools.

There were differences in program outcomes for students in the different grade levels, as shown in Table 4-9. Orienting first to the 1986-87 attendance column, average attendance was progressively higher for ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders, and then declined for students in the twelfth grade. This fits the pattern of students who are survivors in the school, including the normal practice of students reducing attendance in their senior year. The bulk of students in the 9th grade for whom we have data were repeaters and had a large loss in attendance compared to their last year in middle school. Students repeating the tenth grade had a lower loss than students repeating the ninth grade or entering the tenth grade for the first time -- the latter group having the largest attendance loss of all (-12%). These differences are relatively small compared to the average loss of attendance in the 9th and 10th grade. They underscore the difficulty of the transition into high school.

The very high losses in proportion of courses passed for students entering the ninth grade and students entering the tenth grade point up the difficulty of the transition even more sharply. One wonders how much of this is attributable to the different standards of the courses in middle school and high school and whether these standards could be coordinated to ease the transition for students. Of course, attendance itself

TABLE 4-9

Outcomes for Students in Different Grades
DPI High Schools, 1986-87
[Evaluation Sample]

Grade	1986-87 Attendance	Change over 85-86	(N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 85-86	(N)
All 9th	59%	-10%	(522)	35%	- 6%	(572)
New 9th	64%	-11%	(58)	37%	-26%	(153)
Rpt 9th	57%	-10%	(493)	34%	- 0.5%	(402)
All 10th	64%	-10%	(370)	41%	-10%	(342)
New 10th	64%	-12%	(151)	38%	-17%	(162)
Rpt 10th	65%	- 8%	(203)	44%	- 2%	(156)
11th	74%	- 4%	(147)	59%	- 3%	(118)
12th	65%	- 7%	(42)	63%	+ 1%	(41)
Spec Ed	56%	-12%	(94)	36%	-11%	(102)

contributes to the students' grades. However, the attendance of the students who were new in the tenth grade was the same as that of the students repeating the tenth grade, yet the courses pass rate was much higher for the latter group. This suggests some accommodation that occurred between the students and their teachers, which ideally would occur in the students' first year in high school.

Students who are overage. Evaluation sample students who were at or close to expected age for grade attended school at an average rate of 66% in 1986-87, while students who were two or more years overage attended 60%. The attendance change from 1985-86 was virtually the same for both groups: a 9 percent drop for students at or close to expected age (n=380) and a 10 percent drop for students two or more years older than expected (n=713).

Students at or close to expected age for grade passed 44% of their courses in 1986-87, while those two or more years overage passed 37% of their courses. However, the loss in subjects passed was greater for the students who were at or close to age (-11%, N=463) than for the students who were two or more years overage (-3%, N=606). When these data are combined with the grade level information presented above, we realize that it is the holdover students, who are presumably overage, in both grades who did better in the change in proportion of courses passed than at-age students. Do the students have to become overage, and thus in the long run more at risk, in order to be socialized to the requirements of high school? Or do the schools or the dropout prevention program have more effective ways of working with repeater students? Further information and analysis are needed to pursue these questions.

Sex of students. Males and females attended school approximately the same proportion of days in 1986-87, 61% for males vs. 62% for females. The two groups had the same attendance change from the year before: a 10 percent drop.

However, males and females had different rates of passing courses in 1986-87, 36% for the males and 44% for the females. The change of rate from the prior year was -9% for the males and -5% for the females.

These findings make up a very important pattern. The two groups do not differ in 1985-86 attendance, 1986-87 attendance, or attendance change. Yet the boys passed fewer courses than the girls in the prior year and in the present year and had a greater loss in courses passed between the two years. This is consistent with other data that show that it is the behavior of boys in school, and school staff's reactions to or interpretations of their behavior, rather than their attendance or ability as such that results in their getting lower grades. The program obviously did not interrupt this pattern, but it would be important to attempt to in future years.

Students with different prior attendance rates. Prior year attendance and present year attendance are, predictably, closely related. Here are the outcome year attendance rates for students in various categories of prior year absences:

Days absent in 1985-86	1986-87 attendance rate	Change over 1985-86	N
0-19 days absent	82%	-11%	233
20-40 days absent	67%	-14%	338
41-74 days absent	55%	-10%	383
75-180 days absent	36%	- 1%	186

It can also be seen that the greater the students' prior year absences, the lower is their course performance in the ensuing year:

Days absent in 1985-86	1986-87 % of courses passed	Change over 1985-86	N
0-19 days absent	58%	- 7 %	199
20-40 days absent	44%	- 7 %	281
41-74 days absent	34%	- 0.5%	317
75-180 days absent	20%	+ 4 %	120

Many DPP staff and principals of DPP schools have remarked that falling rates and rates of attendance and passing courses are the natural consequence of holding onto or bringing back into the school students who would otherwise have dropped out entirely. One sees in these results some confirmation of this view. The students with the highest rates of absence in the prior year attended at the lowest rate in the current year and passed the fewest courses. However, compared to the prior year, their 1986-87 attendance was virtually the same (-1%) and their rate of passing courses slightly improved (+4%). At the same time, the greatest losses of attendance and courses passed occurred for students whose prior absence rates had been relatively low. This could mean that the programs were relatively effective with students with the lowest prior performance, or simply that these students' attendance and grades in 1986-87 regressed toward the mean -- the sheer chances of going up being stronger for these students than going down, so long as they remained in school. In either case, it is striking that much of the attendance decline is contributed by students who were previously better attenders. Some of this decline may also be regression to the mean, but some also represents alienation from school. The problem, then, is not simply that the worst attenders have been persuaded to stay in school, but that other students are joining their ranks at the same time. A similar issue will be found in the data presented next.

Students with different rates of passing courses in 1985-86. Students' course performance in 1986-87 varied according to their rate of passing courses in 1985-86, as follows:

% Courses passed, 1985-86	1986-87 % of courses passed	Change over 1985-86	N
100% passed	65%	-35%	99
61-99% passed	58%	-19%	312
41-60% passed	43%	- 7%	236
21-40% passed	29%	- 1%	206
0-20% passed	18%	+11%	282

Here, students at the low end of prior performance gained substantially in courses passed, while those at the high end lost substantially. Both regression to the mean and students' responses to program are likely to be involved in these findings. This argues further that the school must not look just at those students whose previous performance was the worst, but must also be concerned with those whose performance in the prior year was higher.

Degrees of Reading Power. Reading test scores were available for only 40% of the evaluation sample, while math test scores were available for even fewer students. Using the reading data that we do have, however, a very significant pattern emerges. We report below the attendance and courses passed findings for students whose prior year DRP score (interpreted as a "mid-instructional level" score -- the level of prose a student can read and understand with a moderate level of instructional assistance) was in one of three ranges: 25 to 48, 49 to 71, and 72 to 99. (Only a few scores below 25 were found in our data and none were included in the evaluation sample. They are likely to be overrepresented in the missing data.)

DRP Test Mid-Instructional Level	1986-87 attendance rate	Change over 1985-86	N
25-48	67%	-11%	86
49-71	67%	-10%	392
72-99	73%	- 6%	111

DRP Test Mid-Instructional Level	1986-87 % of courses passed	Change over 1985-86	N
25-48	40%	-10%	92
49-71	41%	-12%	483
72-99	56%	- 6%	113

One can have several reactions to these findings. First, even the students with the highest reading test scores were losing attendance and subjects passed between the prior year and 1986-87. This does argue that there is much more than reading ability that enters into a students' performance, but one wonders why the programs overall -- there may be differences between individual schools -- did not have more success with high reading ability students during the intervention year itself.

More generally, it is remarkable that there was no difference between the results for students with the lowest reading scores and the results for students whose reading scores were in the center. Indeed, nearly all of the latter students had percentile scores at median or higher for the entire school population. Does reading ability simply not count for much among all of the factors that determine a students' success in these schools? We will be able to examine this question more specifically in subsequent analyses. We predict, for example, that reading test score will not influence grades for boys as much as for girls, because of boys' academic performance in school being more vulnerable to other influences besides academic ability.

The findings presented here on results for students with different entering characteristics do not immediately suggest solutions, but they do raise questions that we believe it will be particularly fruitful for DPI and school staffs to think about seriously. Putting these findings together with staff's own knowledge of what happens in their schools could lead to further insights into what approaches might be found to be most successful and least successful with different students or with students in different grades or programs.

Outcomes for Students Who Participated in the Initiative for Different Lengths of Time

High school students entered the Dropout Prevention Initiative at different points in time during the 1986-87 school year and stayed in the program for different lengths of time. Data on date of program entry and discharge were available for about half of the program students. As was discussed in Chapter Three, nearly eighty percent of the evaluation sample students with data were enrolled in the program during the fall semester. However, not all of these students remained in the program for the full year. Some were discharged from the program but remained in school; the rest were discharged from school altogether. Furthermore, of course, the twenty percent of program students who were enrolled in the program during the spring term were not full-year participants; besides having a later entry date, a number of them were discharged from the program and/or from school before June. Thus, there was a flow of students in and out of the program through the school year.

Did the length of time students were in the Dropout Prevention Initiative have any effect on their attendance and academic performance? The left-hand side of Table 4-10 shows the 1986-87 attendance and courses passed, and the change over 1985-86 values, for students who were in the program for relatively little time (1-3 months), about half a year (4-6 months), or essentially the full school year (7-11 months).

TABLE 4-10

Change in Attendance and Courses Passed for Students with Different Program Entry Dates and Length of Program Participation
DPI High Schools, 1986-87
[Evaluation Sample]

Months in Program	--- All Students ---		-- July-Oct Entry --		-- Nov-Dec Entry --	
	1986-87 Attend.	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Attend.	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Attend.	Change over 1985-86 (N)
Overall	60%	-11% (616)	59%	-10% (413)	62%	-15% (89)
1-3 mos.	48%	-28% (57)	27%	-38% (18)	27%	-31% (8)
4-6 mos.	60%	-12% (157)	42%	-21% (45)	63%	-13% (33)
7-11 mos	62%	- 8% (397)	62%	- 8% (350)	66%	-12% (47)

Months in Program	--- All Students ---		-- July-Oct Entry --		-- Nov-Dec Entry --	
	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)
Overall	37%	- 8% (626)	35%	- 8% (405)	43%	- 4% (85)
1-3 mos.	31%	-21% (38)	(sample too small)		36%	-22% (3)
4-6 mos.	36%	-10% (167)	16%	-14% (29)	38%	- 6% (39)
7-11 mos.	38%	- 7% (417)	37%	- 7% (374)	49%	- 1% (43)

Students participating in the program for 7-11 months showed a drop in attendance of eight percent (-8%), compared to a change of -28% for students in the program only 1-3 months, and a change of -12% for students in the program for 4-6 months.

Similarly, students in the program 7-11 months had an average decline in the proportion of courses passed of seven percent (-7%), compared to -21% for students in the program for 1-3 months, and -10% for students in the program for 4-6 months.

Table 4-10 also shows performance outcomes for students who entered the program at two different times in the school year (July-October and November-December) and stayed for different numbers of months. Overall, an effect of length of time in the program holds regardless of the date at which students entered the program. In each of the two periods shown, students who remained in the program a greater number of months had better outcomes than students who were in the program a shorter time. Results are similar for students who entered the program during January-February (the start of the second term) or March-May, although fewer students are represented in each category of length of time (table not shown).

These findings would seem to suggest that increased exposure to the Dropout Prevention Initiative improves student performance. However, we suspected that most students who survive in school a longer time have attendance and courses passed rates that are better than those for students who are in school a shorter period of time, regardless of whether they participate in a special program. To test this theory, we examined the outcomes for comparison group students, broken down into categories for length of stay in school. Since comparison group students do not enter or leave a special program, their length of stay is calculated on the basis of number of months in school prior to either the end of the school year or the time at which they dropped out of school. These outcomes are presented in the right-hand column of Table 4-11. Indeed, students who stay in school for seven or more months have attendance losses (-7%) that are smaller than for other students, and losses in courses passed (-5%) that are equal to the rate for students in school 4-6 months, and less than the rate for students in school only 1-3 months. (Note the small sample size for the latter group; students in school only 1-3 months generally become dropouts, and this group has a large amount of missing data. Presumably their course passing rate would be at or near zero, bringing the change scores for this group down even farther.)

The first two columns in Table 4-11 show outcomes by length of time in program for all students (these results were also shown in Table 4-10). The second set of columns in Table 4-11 shows results only for the attendance-eligible students who were served by the program -- students whose outcomes can fairly be contrasted with those for the attendance-eligible comparison group students. We see a striking difference between the attendance change of students in the program for 4-6 months (-9%,

TABLE 4-11

Change in Attendance and Courses Passed for Program Students and Comparison Students, by Length of Time in Program or School DPI High Schools, 1986-87 [Evaluation Sample]

	DPI Program Students				Comparison Group*	
Months in Program/ School	All Students		Attend.-Eligible			
	1986-87 Attend.	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Attend.	Change over 1985-85 (N)	1986-87 Attend.	Change over 1985-86 (N)
Overall	60%	-11% (616)	47%	-10% (346)	46%	-11% (2531)
1-3 mos.	48%	-28% (57)	27%	-28% (30)	25%	-24% (205)
4-6 mos.	60%	-12% (157)	49%	- 9% (76)	28%	-23% (442)
7-11 mos.	62%	- 8% (397)	49%	- 7% (237)	53%	- 7% (1884)

	DPI Program Students				Comparison Group*	
Months in Program/ School	All Students		Attend.-Eligible			
	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)
Overall	37%	- 8% (626)	27%	- 1% (261)	34%	- 5% (1416)
1-3 mos.	31%	-21% (38)	15%	-17% (12)	23%	-19% (5)
4-6 mos.	36%	-10% (167)	23%	- 5% (55)	29%	- 5% (76)
7-11 mos.	38%	- 7% (417)	29%	+ 1% (192)	34%	- 5% (1335)

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* The comparison group students met the program's attendance eligibility criteria but were not served by the program. They include students who were discharged as dropouts, and their length of time in school is based on number of months in school, or if they were discharged, number of months in school prior to being discharged.

N=76) and the attendance change of comparison group students in school for 4-6 months (-23%, N=442). There is a smaller difference between the change in courses passed for DPI students in the program for 7-11 months (+1%, N=192) and the change in courses passed for comparison group students in school for 7-11 months (-5%, N=1335). All other categories show little or no difference between program and comparison group students.

It is likely that comparison group students who remained in school for 7-11 months did not become dropouts in that year. Table 4-11 shows that these students had an average attendance loss of -7% and an average loss in courses passed of -5%. These figures could be considered baseline expected outcomes for similar (i.e., attendance-eligible) students in the program who also did not become dropouts. Did spending some time in the dropout prevention program result in attendance and course passing rates that differed from these expected values? Regarding attendance, there was very little difference. Attendance-eligible, non-dropout program students had an overall attendance change of -7%. Most of these students (201 of 264) were in the program for 7-11 months; their average attendance change was -6%. There were slight differences between the two groups of students on the courses passed outcome. While full-year comparison group students had a change in courses passed of -5%, the attendance-eligible, non-dropout program students overall showed a change of -0.2%. Those students in the program for 7-11 months (165 of 214) showed a gain in courses passed of +2%. Thus, full-year participation in the Dropout Prevention Initiative appears to be associated with an attendance outcome that is about equal to the value expected for non-participants, and a course passing outcome that is slightly better. The net change in courses passed amounts to a gain of about one course out of fourteen for the school year.

In summary, these figures illustrate some tendency for increased time in the program to result in improved student outcomes. The trend does not hold for all students, however. More complete data on length of time in the Dropout Prevention Initiative will be available for the Year Three evaluation, and this issue will be addressed again in that analysis.

Outcomes for the Different Service Models and for Comparison Groups

In this section we will address, though we will not be able to answer completely, the question of the relative effectiveness of the different service models in the Dropout Prevention Initiative. We will compare the outcomes for program students in each model to outcomes for control or comparison group students in the same model.

The comparison samples. Four comparison samples of non-targeted students are used in this report. The four samples were drawn from the following sets of schools: (a) the six DPP modified systemic schools in the DPI, (b) the four DPP modified CBO schools in the DPI, (c) the three AIDP schools representing a pure CBO model in the DPI, (representing both the pure CBO and school-with-CBO comparison models) and (d) the twenty-three AIDP schools that are not included in the DPI. In the first three cases, one hundred students were drawn randomly from each school in the designated set, from the total population of students who met DPP/AIDP attendance eligibility criteria (i.e., who were absent 40 or more days in 1985-86 or 20 or more days in Spring 1986) and who were not listed as targeted for DPI services. Two thousand students, or somewhat less than a hundred per school, were selected for the AIDP comparison sample, using the same criteria used for the DPI comparison samples. For all of these samples, students from all four grades and Special Education were included in proportion to their numbers in the total school populations.

The first comparison sample specified above, for the schools in the modified systemic model, has been thought of as a "trickle down" sample because of the anticipation that services for students in this model would reach more students than just those named on the lists of targeted students. The strategy of drawing a comparison sample for all three DPI models allows us to look for the relative "trickle-down" effect in the different sets of DPI schools--a more precise analysis than if we examined it in the modified systemic schools alone. This same perspective applies to the comparison sample drawn from the 23 AIDP schools. That is, while these students too were not targeted for services, the programs operating in their schools might have had some positive effect on the school environments generally and presumably on them. In other words, none of the comparison groups can be assumed to be unaffected by the programs in their schools, so that the question becomes one of finding whether there are greater changes for non-targeted students in some schools than in others, particularly whether there are more positive changes for non-targeted students in the modified systemic schools. Of course, the comparison samples will be equally useful in assessing the relative effects of the different DPI program models on the targeted students directly.

The DPI models. As was discussed in Chapter Two, the DPP modified systemic model includes six high schools in which the dropout prevention activity is thought to be implemented first of all on a school-wide, systemic basis, but with the assistance of CBOs. (A "pure systemic" model, in which no CBO would be involved in the program, has not been implemented.) The DPP modified CBO model includes the four high schools in which the greatest part of the dropout prevention activity is meant to be carried out by the CBOs, primarily Operation Success, but with some systemic support. A pure CBO model is represented by students who were served by the CBO only in three AIDP high schools. However, most of the students in this category turn out to come from just one of the three high schools, so the results give an unbalanced picture of what this model might be or indeed what the results were for the AIDP program in the three schools more generally. We have also included data for the students in these three schools who were served by school AIDP staff only or by a combination of school and CBO staff. This cluster is called the "AIDP school-with-CBO model," which is distinguished from the other AIDP models (the SOAR and Strategies schools) by having a CBO as part of the program. What distinguished the AIDP school-based approach from the three DPI models generally, however, was that all of the targeted students in this approach were block-scheduled in special instructional programs, whereas only some students in the DPI model had block programming in 1986-87.

Once again it must be recalled that the list issue compromises the comparison of models against one another and against comparison groups. Five of the six schools in the modified systemic model had relatively cleared lists, while the four schools in the modified CBO model and the three in the pure CBO model had relatively uncleared lists. Furthermore, the lists for two of the three AIDP school-based model programs were, judging from our observations, probably more cleared or updated than the pure CBO lists from the same schools, although the AIDP lists were obtained in November. Programs with cleared lists would be expected to fare better against comparison groups than programs with uncleared lists would.

Dropout discharge rates for program models and comparison groups. Table 4-12 shows the proportion of students discharged as dropouts in 1986-87 in the various samples for targeted and non-targeted students. Orienting to the first column representing the 4589 students in the DPI full roster for whom we have discharge data, 9% were discharged from the modified systemic schools, 18% from the modified CBO schools, and 35% from the pure CBO schools. Focusing just on these models, we see that 9% of targeted students on the full roster for the modified systemic schools, but 18% of those on the full roster for the modified CBO schools, were discharged as dropouts in 1986-87. For the dropout data, the full roster sample is judged to be more reliable than the evaluation sample, so we accept 18% as a better estimate for the modified CBO schools.

A dropout discharge rate of 35% is shown for the 3 schools in the pure CBO model. As explained above, however, other students were targeted for services by a combination of school and CBO services, and these students are included in the full roster sample for the DPI-AIDP schools. The dropout discharge rate for these other targeted students in 1986-87 was 17% (not shown in Table 4-12), while for the total roster of targeted students in these three schools (including the students served by the CBO only) the rate was 19%.

Up to this point, there is the possibility that the modified systemic schools discharged students as dropouts at a lower rate than the other DPI models, but we cannot separate this from the clearing effect.

The next two columns in Table 4-12 report dropout discharge

TABLE 4-12

Proportion of Students Discharged as Dropouts in 1986-87: Comparison of Different Samples DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	% Dropouts in Full Program Roster	(Total N)	% Dropouts among Attendance-Eligible in Full Program Roster	(Total N)	% Dropouts in Attendance-Eligible Comparison Samples	(Total N)
DPP Modified Systemic Schools						
Overall	9%	(1815)	17%	(712)	37%	(596)
1	8%		19%		53%	
5	11%		18%		33%	
6	8%		16%		41	
7	6%		10%		29	
8	8%		18%		33	
10	13%		17%		33	
DPP Modified CBO Schools						
Overall	18%	(1425)	26%	(757)	39%	(396)
3	11%		20%		27%	
11	22%		29%		45%	
12	2%		3%		30%	
13	20%		32%		55%	
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO Model						
Overall	35%	(178)	46%	(79)	44%	(298)*
2	50%		80%		49%	
4	35%		42%		40%	
9	7%		20%		34%	
DPI-AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison Model						
Overall	19%	(1349)	29%	(597)	(same as above)	
2	21		32		"	
4	19		27		"	
9	15		27		"	

rates for just those students from the full rosters who were eligible for services on the basis of attendance in 1985-86. This selection has been made in order to allow a direct comparison to the various comparison samples of students by DPI who were eligible for service on the basis of prior attendance. The modified systemic schools continue to have a lower percent of dropout discharges among program students, compared to program discharges in the schools in the other models, but the list issue still applies here. Among the comparison students who were eligible for services but not targeted, in the various samples is that the differences between the models nearly vanish. In the modified systemic model, 37% of the comparison students were discharged as dropouts in 1986-87, while in the modified CBO model 39% were discharged as dropouts. There is no evidence here for a trickle-down effect of reducing dropout discharges in the modified systemic schools.

The percents of comparison groups students discharged in the several sets of schools are in fact astonishingly similar. In the three AIDP schools that contain the pure CBO model and the AIDP school-based model, 41% of the eligible non-targeted students were discharged as dropouts, and in the 23 remaining AIDP schools, 39% of these students were discharged as dropouts. Thus 39% of all of the students in these four samples combined, were discharged as dropouts in 1986-87. In the Dropout Prevention Initiative as a whole, 24% of the attendance-eligible targeted students were discharged as dropouts, and in the ten Dropout Prevention Program schools, 22% (or more, assuming that some were removed from the cleared lists of several schools) of the targeted students were discharged as dropouts. A dramatic short-run effect of being targeted for services in the DPI, then, was a reduced likelihood of being discharged as a dropout. Was this just a matter of administrative policy? In School 12, it appears to have been just that -- since only 3% of the eligible targeted students, but 30% of the eligible non-targeted students, were discharged as dropouts. In other schools, however, the discharge processes were more subtle, and it is reasonable to conclude that the program itself contributed to students' remaining in school.

Attendance results for program models and comparison groups. Table 4-13 shows attendance results for four main categories of students: (1) all evaluation sample students served in the three DPI models (identified in the table as DPP modified systemic, DPP modified CBO, and DPI-AIDP pure CBO) plus the remaining students served by a combination of school and CBO staff in the three DPI-AIDP schools; (2) the above groups of students excluding those who were discharged as dropouts; (3) the complete comparison groups selected for the three DPP/DPI models plus the comparison group for the remaining AIDP schools; and (4) the comparison groups excluding students discharged as dropouts.

The most meaningful results are the ones shown for the various groups of students not including dropouts. The modified systemic schools show a smaller attendance loss (-2%) than the

Table 4-13

Attendance of Students Who Meet Attendance Eligibility Criteria: Comparison of Different Samples

	Average Attendance 1985-86	Average Attendance 1986-87	% Change	(N)
DPI Program Students* (including students discharged as dropouts)				
DPP Mod. Systemic	60%	54%	- 5%	(331)
DPP Mod. CBO	61%	53%	- 8%	(276)
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO	49%	29%	-22%	(74)
Total	59%	51%	- 8%	(681)
AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison Model	55%	52%	- 4%	(517)
DPI Program Student (excluding students discharged as dropouts)				
DPP Mod. Systemic	60%	59%	-2%	(269)
DPP Mod. CBO	62%	55%	-7%	(221)
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO	53%	32%	-20%	(43)
Total	61%	57%	-4%	(490)
AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison Model	57%	57%	-0.4%	(374)
Students Not in DPI (including students discharged as dropouts)				
DPP Mod. Sys. Comparison	56%	49%	-9%	(405)
DPP Mod. CBO Comparison	54%	49%	-9%	(251)
DPI-AIDP Comparison	56%	37%	-20%	(269)
AIDP Comparison	57%	47%	-11%	(1564)
Total	56%	46%	-11%	(2531)
Students Not in DPI (excluding students				

modified CBO schools (-8%), which in turn have a smaller loss than the small sample representing a pure CBO model (-20%). For the remaining students in the school-based model in the three AIDP schools that house the pure CBO model, there was virtually no attendance loss (-0.4%). Three of the four comparison groups of students who were attendance-eligible but not targeted had losses of five percent (-5%), while the fourth had a loss of three percent (-3%). Taking into account the fact that some effect of the list-clearing still remains for the modified systemic schools, only the school-based AIDP model appears to have obtained attendance results that were an improvement on the outcome for eligible students who were not targeted for services.

Courses passed results for program models and comparison groups. Table 4-14 shows the findings on percent of courses passed for attendance-eligible students in the evaluation sample only. Data on courses passed are missing for too many students in all four of the comparison samples to permit including them in this table. We will pursue this matter further in a discussion of the modified systemic comparison group below.

Orienting first to the results for all students who were eligible on the basis of prior attendance and who were targeted for services, students in the modified systemic schools gained three percent (+3%) in courses passed, while the modified CBO school students lost five percent (-5%). When dropouts are excluded from the sample, modified systemic schools showed an average increase in courses passed of six percent (+6%) and modified CBO schools showed a decline of four percent (-4%). Once again, however, the list issue clouds this picture to an indeterminate extent.

The few students in the pure CBO model, mostly coming from the one school that used this model extensively, had virtually no change in courses passed between 1985-86 and 1986-87, whether dropouts are excluded or not. The fourteen percent (+14%) gain for students in the AIDP school-with-CBO comparison model (and +16% score when dropouts are excluded) is very substantial. However, this finding must be seen in the light of the very low percent of courses passed by these students in 1985-86. Some of the gain for these students, and even more for those in the pure CBO model, probably represents regression to the mean for those students who remained in school. Still, some of the gain in the AIDP school-with CBO model can also be attributed to the same block programming practice that has led to more positive results in the AIDP program generally than in the DPP so far.

Even with gains of six and sixteen percent, respectively, students these samples passed only 40% of their courses in the modified systemic and the AIDP school-with-CBO based models, while in the other models they passed even lesser proportions of their courses. At this rate, it would require more than double the expected time in school to graduate, even assuming that the percents apply to a full load of courses. Putting this together with the finding that the rate of discharging targeted students

Table 4-14

Courses Passed by Students Who Meet Attendance Eligibility Criteria: Comparison of Different Samples

	Average % Courses Passed 1985-86	Average % Courses Passed 1986-87	% Change	(N)
DPI Program Students (including students discharged as dropouts)				
DPP Mod. Systemic	31%	36%	+ 3.0%	(281)
DPP Mod. CBO	33%	32%	- 5.0%	(271)
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO	12%	9%	+ 0.3%	(31)
Total	30%	33%	- 0.5%	(529)
DPI-AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison	20%	36%	+14.0%	(412)
DPI Program Students (excluding students discharged as dropouts)				
DPP Mod. Systemic	32%	40%	+6.0%	(241)
DPP Mod. CBO	35%	35%	-4.0%	(186)
DPI-AIDP Pure CBO	12%	9%	+0.2%	(21)
Total	34%	37%	+17.0%	(427)
DPI-AIDP School-with-CBO Comparison	22%	40%	+16.0%	(326)

as dropouts is lower in the DPI and school-based AIDP programs than the rates for non-targeted attendance-eligible students in these schools, the overall effect of the programs might be more one of prolonging the dropping out process than of reversing it for substantial numbers of students. This depends upon what arrangements are being made to facilitate students' pursuing their degrees in a different time frame, for example PM school but also course requirements and sequences that are currently controlled at the city and state level as well as within the individual schools.

Outcomes for Program Students and Comparison Group Students in Different Categories of Prior Year Attendance and Courses Passed. Overall, program students were less likely than comparison group students to be discharged as dropouts during 1986-87, their attendance declines were just slightly smaller, and the tentative indications are that the two groups did not differ significantly in proportion of courses passed. How did the outcomes for program and comparison group students differ when students' prior levels of performance were taken into consideration? The first panel of Table 4-15 shows outcomes broken down according to students' number of days absent the prior year (1985-86). At nearly every level of prior absence, program students had just slightly better outcomes than comparison group students. There were two exceptions, one with a stronger outcome for program students and one with a weaker outcome for program students. Program students who had been absent from school 41-74 days the previous year showed a loss in courses passed of -0.5%, compared to a loss of -6% for comparison group students with the same range of prior absences. Both program and comparison group students who had been absent 75-180 days the previous year showed gains in courses passed; the gain was one percentage point higher for comparison group students, but in both cases probably reflects regression to the mean, since these students basically had nowhere to go but up.

The second panel of Table 4-15 shows a similar breakdown of outcomes by prior absences, this time excluding dropouts from the analysis. Performance was nearly equal for the two sets of students. The strongest difference was in courses passed for students in the mid-range of prior absences (41-74 days absent). Here, program students showed a gain in courses passed of 2%, while comparison group students showed a loss of -3%.

Table 4-16 shows the proportion of courses passed in 1986-87 and the change over 1985-86 rates for program and comparison group students, both with and without dropouts, broken down by categories of prior courses passed. Again, the differences between program students and comparison groups students are very small, this time not as consistently favorable to program students as was the case using categories of prior absences. The strongest difference was for students who had passed 41-60% of their prior year courses: program students in this category showed a change of -7%, compared to a change of -14% for comparison group students.

TABLE 4-15

Outcomes for Program Students and Comparison Group Students in Different Categories of Prior Year Attendance
DPI High Schools, 1986-87
[Evaluation Sample]

I. Samples Including Students Discharged as Dropouts

	--- Program Students ----		-- Comparison Students --	
Days Absent in 1985-86	1986-87 Attendance	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Attendance	Change over 1985-86 (N)
0-19 days	82%	-11% (233)	--	--
20-40 days	67%	-14% (338)	63%	-16% (483)
41-74 days	55%	-10% (383)	52%	-13% (1135)
75-180 days	36%	- 1% (186)	29%	- 4% (799)

	--- Program Students ----		-- Comparison Students --	
Days Absent in 1985-86	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)
0-19 days	58%	- 7% (199)		
20-40 days	44%	- 7% (281)	46%	-9% (329)
41-74 days	34%	- 0.5% (317)	32%	-6% (723)
75-180 days	20%	+ 4% (120)	24%	+5% (304)

II. Samples Excluding Students Discharged as Dropouts

	--- Program Students ---- minus Dropouts		-- Comparison Students -- minus Dropouts	
Days Absent in 1985-86	1986-87 Attendance	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Attendance	Change over 1985-86 (N)
0-19 days	82%	-10% (220)	--	--
20-40 days	71%	-11% (297)	68%	-10% (400)
41-74 days	59%	- 6% (301)	59%	- 7% (820)
75-180 days	40%	+ 2% (135)	40%	+ 3% (393)

	--- Program Students ---- minus Dropouts		-- Comparison Students -- minus Dropouts	
Days Absent in 1985-86	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)
0-19 days	59%	- 7% (192)	--	--
20-40 days	45%	- 6% (263)	47%	-9% (295)
41-74 days	38%	+ 2% (267)	37%	-3% (602)
75-180 days	23%	+ 7 (97)	29%	+7% (218)

TABLE 4-16

Outcomes for Program Students and Comparison Group Students in Different Categories of Prior Year Courses Passed Including and Excluding Students Discharged as Dropouts DPI High Schools, 1986-87

[Evaluation Sample]

	--- Program Students ----		-- Comparison Students --	
% Courses Passed in 1985-86	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)
100% passed	65%	-35% (99)	59%	-41% (41)
61-99% passed	58%	-19% (312)	60%	-15% (284)
41-60% passed	43%	- 7% (236)	35%	-14% (254)
21-40% passed	29%	- 1% (206)	27%	- 3% (284)
0-20% passed	18%	+11% (282)	15%	+ 9% (479)

	--- Program Students ---- minus Dropouts		-- Comparison Students -- minus Dropouts	
% Courses Passed in 1985-86	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)	1986-87 Courses Passed	Change over 1985-86 (N)
100% passed	65%	-35% (94)	66%	-34% (34)
61-99% passed	59%	-18% (293)	60%	-15% (277)
41-60% passed	44%	- 6% (220)	39%	-10% (221)
21-40% passed	31%	+ 2% (178)	30%	0 (231)
0-20% passed	20%	+13% (235)	20%	+14% (338)

In general, then, the outcomes for program and comparison group students differ slightly but not substantially, even when their prior year performance is taken into consideration.

Modified systemic comparison groups: the trickle-down question. We have already reported that thirty seven percent (37%) of the comparison students in the modified systemic schools were discharged as dropouts in 1986-87. This figure was not substantially different from the comparison group rates of 39% for the modified CBO schools, 41% for the DPI-AIDP pure systemic schools, and 39% for the remaining AIDP schools. We have also reported that the attendance loss of the comparison group for the modified systemic group, -9%, was the same or very close to the loss for the other comparison groups, which ranged between -9% and -12%. These findings suggest that a trickle-down effect was no stronger in the modified systemic schools than in the other models.

We also examined results for another, overlapping comparison group for the modified systemic schools. This second group had 596 students, all but 6 of them from the ninth and tenth grades, as opposed to the 600 students in the first comparison group coming from all of the grades plus Special Education. (Both comparison groups contained only students who were eligible for the DPI on the basis of previous attendance.) The first comparison group has more complete data for both discharge status and attendance, but the second group, because it was included in an OEA special data collection, has better data for courses passed.

For attendance, the second comparison group showed a loss of eight percent (-8%) between 1985-86 and 1986-87 for those students who were not discharged as dropouts. As already reported, the corresponding statistic for the first comparison group was minus five percent (-5%) -- a difference that probably reflects the fact that the second sample includes more ninth and tenth graders, whose attendance is lower among school survivors than eleventh and twelfth graders. Again as reported before, the attendance change for the targeted students who were attendance-eligible and not discharged as dropouts was minus two percent (-2%) for the modified systemic schools. When one takes into account the fact that the clearing of the lists has probably reduced the attendance loss that shows for the targeted students in these schools, this result does not look very different from the result for comparison students. However, the result also does not differ from the minus five percent (-5%) obtained for both the modified CBO comparison sample and the AIDP comparison sample. Thus, again there is little evidence of the program having a trickle-down effect on the attendance of eligible, non-targeted students.

Courses passed data on attendance-eligible, non-targeted students are missing for 63% of the first modified systemic comparison sample, but for a relatively lower proportion, 38%, of the second comparison sample. For the second sample, the change in proportion of courses passed between 1985-86 and 1986-87 was minus three percent (-3%). This result is lower than the result found with the cleared lists of targeted students, +6%, and virtually the same as the result for the targeted students in the modified CBO schools, -4%. If there is a trickle-down effect on courses passed for attendance-eligible students in the modified systemic schools, it is at best a modest one.

It is often remarked in the modified systemic schools that all of the students in the school are at risk. This is said partly in justification of distributing services to students who do not necessarily meet eligibility criteria, for example students who enroll in after-school classes for credit. The effect of the Dropout Prevention Program on these students as well should be taken into account. The samples drawn for the Year Three evaluation will allow a somewhat greater purchase on this question than the samples for the Year Two evaluation.

Changes in School-Wide Attendance, LTAs, and Dropouts

All schools in the Dropout Prevention Initiative provided direct services to a target group of students in 1986-87, but in the ten DPP high schools, the focus was also on developing school-wide improvements. These particularly had to do with changing a school's responsiveness to at-risk students, but more generally were concerned with improving a school's overall climate. In one or another school, the DPP fostered changes in the organization of the school, added school staff -- teachers, guidance counselors, and family workers -- or brought community-based organizations into the school. The program sponsored attendance outreach and incentives, addressed school order and security issues through an automated entry system and conflict mediation, and added instructional options before, after, or during the school day. The level of funding which schools received from the Dropout Prevention Initiative did not allow for extensive school-wide changes, but in the schools of the DPP modified systemic model especially, program components were often directed toward more students than simply a targeted at-risk group.

Accordingly, the question of changes in various school-wide measures of performance arises. This section examines schools' overall attendance rates calculated both with and without LTAs (long-term absentees), number and percentage of LTAs and dropouts, and indicators of school safety (total number of suspensions, number of suspensions for aggression against students, and number of serious incidents) during 1986-87, and changes in these measures over 1985-86 values. We are presenting only some preliminary findings, and will have more to say about trends in school-wide outcomes in our Year Three final report. Notably, we are not reporting similar findings for non-DPI high schools, and thus can make no firm conclusions about whether the Dropout Prevention Initiative is responsible for any changes in these performance measures. Indeed, given that school-wide outcomes are dependent on so many factors, we want to be very cautious in positing any very strong links between the Dropout Prevention Initiative and general school performance.

The Dropout Prevention Initiative is a retention program, with the aim of helping at-risk or marginal students stay in school and improve their attendance and course performance. To some degree, it is also a retrieval program, focused on trying to bring truants or, in some cases, previously discharged students back into school. Given this, one might expect to see a decrease in the proportion of a school's register that is made up of long-term absentees. Looking at the first portion of Table 4-17, we see that in fact eight of the thirteen high schools did have small drops in percent of LTAs, ranging from -.1% to -4.3%. The five schools which showed increases in numbers of LTAs had quite small increases: three were less than one percent, and only one school showed an increase of over two percent. No significant patterns can be seen in changes among the LTA population for the different program models. Four of the six modified systemic schools (Schools 5, 7, 8 and 10) lowered the percentages of LTAs on their school rosters, as did two of the three pure CBO schools (Schools 2 and 9) and two of the four modified CBO schools (Schools 11 and 12).

What changes in school-wide attendance might one expect to see? It has been argued by program personnel that, when truants come back to school, their attendance is still erratic enough to bring school-wide averages down. On the other hand, there are plenty of DPI program services and activities designed to improve the attendance both of targeted students and other students. The second section in Table 4-17 shows that only two schools in the Dropout Prevention Initiative had a decrease in average attendance from 1985-86 to 1986-87 when the LTAs are included in the calculations. Several schools had relatively high increases: average attendance rose by 7.7 percentage points in School 9, by 8.7 points in School 7, by 9.2 points in School 11, and by 10.9 percentage points in School 13. All of the schools which decreased their ranks of LTAs also increased their average attendance; this may run counter to the argument that returning LTAs bring school-wide averages down, if in fact the LTAs were coming back into school.

Taking up this last point, while one way of reducing the number of LTAs on a school's roster is to bring them back into school, another is to discharge them. What did happen to the annual dropout rate in the schools that reduced their numbers of LTAs? In five of the eight schools (Schools 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11), both the LTA rate and the dropout rate declined, suggesting that LTAs were indeed returning to school and not being discharged. As we noted above, each of these schools showed an increase in average attendance as well. Four of these five schools (Schools 5, 7, 8, and 10) are modified systemic schools; the other (School 11) is a modified CBO school. In one of the three other schools with fewer LTAs (School 12), both the change

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Table 4-17

School-wide Changes in Attendance, LTAs, and Dropouts
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	% LTAs in 86-87*	Change over 85-86	1986-87 Attendance with LTAs	Change over 85-86	1986-87 Attendance w/out LTAs	Change over 85-86	# Dropouts in 1986-87	% of Register	Change over 85-86
1	13.2%	1.2%	70.2%	0.1%	77.3%	-5.5%	464	16.8%	-1.0%
2	4.6%	-4.3%	69.7%	5.8%	76.2%	2.4%	698	13.9%	9.5%
3	6.2%	0.9%	75.0%	-0.2%	80.3%	1.9%	174	7.2%	-1.6%
4	4.6%	0.9%	80.5%	0.1%	84.2%	-1.2%	241	6.6%	-5.8%
5	5.4%	-0.9%	78.3%	1.9%	83.1%	-0.1%	283	10.1%	-1.3%
6	10.2%	0.6%	75.8%	-1.1%	83.0%	2.8%	400	11.8%	0.5%
7	9.9%	-2.2%	74.3%	8.7%	80.0%	4.6%	300	9.4%	-0.2%
8	9.2%	-1.3%	71.8%	4.2%	78.7%	0.2%	388	10.7%	-0.2%
9	6.0%	-2.2%	76.5%	7.7%	83.0%	7.0%	252	8.4%	3.2%
10	8.1%	-0.4%	74.1%	2.7%	79.1%	2.4%	190	7.8%	-2.7%
11	9.3%	-2.2%	68.3%	9.2%	75.3%	5.3%	236	11.6%	-1.2%
12	10.2%	-0.1%	68.2%	3.6%	77.9%	-2.0%	230	8.1%	0.2%
13	13.3%	2.5%	71.9%	10.9%	77.9%	9.7%	163	16.2%	7.6%

in % LTAs and the change in % dropouts were minimal (-0.1% and +0.2%, respectively). In the second of the three schools (School 9), the drop in LTAs was matched with a similar rise in dropouts: -2.2% and +3.2%, respectively. And the third school (School 2) had the overall greatest decline in LTAs (-4.3%) and the overall greatest increase in dropouts (+9.5%). Both School 9 and School 2 are AIDP schools.

Overall, eight of the thirteen schools showed a decline in annual dropout rate, in magnitudes ranging from -0.2% to -5.8%. The five schools showing increases in dropouts included two schools with small increases (0.2% in School 12 and 0.5% in School 6), and three schools with larger increases (3.2% in School 9, 7.6% in School 13, and 9.5% in School 2). School 13 is an interesting case. In that school, there was an increase in proportion of LTAs (+2.5%), and an increase in dropouts (+7.6%). There was an increase of +9.7% in average attendance calculated without LTAs -- which one might expect, since LTAs and dropouts have been skimmed off. But there also was an increase in average attendance calculated with LTAs (+10.9%). An optimistic interpretation might be that some LTAs were improving their attendance far above prior year rates, and compensated for attendance losses due to increased numbers of LTAs.

Looking a bit further at attendance calculated without LTAs, we see that four schools had declines on this measure (-5.5% in School 1, -1.2% in School 4, -0.1% in School 5, and -2.0% in School 12). The average attendance increased in the other nine schools, but only three schools (Schools 9, 11, and 13) had increases greater than five percentage points, and one of those schools (School 9) is an AIDP school, which did not have a school-wide focus to its dropout prevention program.

Two general points can be made. First, 1986-87 was just the second year of the Dropout Prevention Initiative, and it would probably be overly optimistic to expect major changes in any of these school-wide outcomes by the end of the second year. The fact that there are areas of growth might even indicate that schools were realizing the gains from other earlier improvements, including personnel changes such as new principals. Second, regardless of the degree of change, overall the thirteen DPI schools fall short of desired levels of achievement on these school-wide outcomes. All but one of the schools have an LTA proportion that is higher than the Chancellor's minimum standard of 5% LTAs; the average daily attendance (excluding LTAs) in no school rises above 85%, and the annual dropout rates range from 6% to over 16%, translating into four-year estimates as high as 50%. Clearly, these schools are not yet out of the woods.

Table 4-18 presents three years' worth of figures on suspensions and serious incidents in the ten DPP high schools. These school-wide statistics are included in this analysis because one focus of the Dropout Prevention Program has been on improving school safety, order, and security. All ten DPP high schools (but not the AIDP schools) used part of their program

Table 4-18

School-wide Changes in Suspensions and Serious Incidents DPI High Schools, 1986-87+

School Code	Suspensions for Aggression Against Other Students 1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	Total Principal's Suspensions 1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	Serious Incidents 1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
1*	118	82	78	240	163	150	36	26	28
3*	138	77	21	207	105	40	100	67	30
5	113	104	103	167	160	178	18	10	14
6	78	71	16	208	126	29	136	80	55
7	1	78	65	171	142	285	30	27	15
8*	104	31	35	232	95	95	78	64	61
10	145	112	124	231	186	187	83	69	49
11	22	31	24	51	74	53	17	51	67
12*	156	27	17	115	58	38	119	47	52
13	61	54	47	138	133	95	28	20	16

+ This analysis is based on the 10 DPP high schools only.

* These schools had the conflict mediation program called Project SMART (implemented in Schools 1, 8, and 12 in Fall, 1985; implemented in School 3 in Spring, 1987).

funds for an automated entry system that codes students' presence in school electronically as they enter the building. Several schools contracted with Victim Services for a conflict mediation program called Project SMART, designed to reduce suspensions due to conflicts between students and staff or among students. Other schools used part of their DPP funds to pay for additional security guards or security equipment.

"Aggressive acts by pupils against other pupils" is one of twenty categories of reasons for principal's suspensions of students. The frequency of this type of suspension declined in six of the ten DPP high schools over the three year period from 1984-85 (the year just prior to DPP) to 1986-87. The decline was dramatic in Schools 1, 3, 6, 8, and 12; all of these schools except School 6 had the Project SMART program. Total suspensions declined in seven of the ten DPP schools, again including all four schools with Project SMART.

For example, in School 1, 118 aggressive acts by pupils against other pupils were reported in 1984-85, prior to the implementation of the DPP Project Smart program. By school year 1986-87, aggressive acts by pupils against other pupils in School 1 dropped to 78. In School 8, the frequency of suspensions for any reason declined from 232 in 1984-85 to 95 in 1986-87; in School 12, the rates were 115 in 1984-85 and 38 in 1986-87. School 3, another Project SMART school, also showed declines in suspensions for aggression (from 138 to 21) and in total suspensions, from 207 to 40, but since Project SMART was not implemented there until the spring term of 1987, it is likely that other factors were bringing the suspension rate down.

High schools annually report "incidents" in their school to the Office of School Safety. Serious incidents are defined as: possession of a controlled substance, sex offense, robbery, weapons possession, and assault. All but one of the DPP high schools showed decreases in the number of serious incidents reported between 1984-85 and 1986-87. Only School 10 showed an increase, from 17 in 1984-85 to 67 in 1986-87.

Overall, it appears from the statistics that the DPP high schools were less dangerous in 1986-87 than they had been in 1984-85, and that fewer students were being suspended overall, or specifically for acts of aggression against other students. It should be kept in mind that schools have some control over the statistics they report, and whether or not these schools are actually safer, with students showing better behavior, cannot be completely inferred from the numbers.

Summary

The analysis of targeted students' entering characteristics confirmed the fact that these students were highly at risk, at the same time that they varied considerably along the parameters of age, gender, prior attendance and courses passed, and test

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performance, and thus warranted a well differentiated approach.

DPP targeted students' average attendance in Year Two was 64% and had been 71% in the prior year. Results differed systematically for schools which had cleared their lists of targeted students, i. e., removed names of students who were discharged or LTA as of mid-year, and schools which had not cleared their lists. For the cleared schools, the average attendance of targeted students in Year Two dropped six percent (-6%), while for the uncleared schools it fell eleven percent (-11%). Eleven percent might be a better estimate of the average attendance loss for targeted students in the DPP as a whole.

Thirty five percent (35%) of the targeted students overall improved their attendance between 1985-86 and 1986-87. This fell short of the Chancellor's goal of 50% of targeted students improving attendance.

The average rate of passing courses for all targeted students was 42% in 1986-87 and had been 46% in the prior year. For the uncleared schools, the loss was minus nine percent (-9%), while for the cleared schools the loss was minus four percent (-4%). An accurate average attendance for the DPP as a whole might be closer to nine percent than four percent.

Forty-three percent (43%) of the targeted students who had previously failed at least one course improved their percent of courses passed in 1986-87 compared to the prior year. This approached, but fell short of the Chancellor's goal of 50%.

Thirteen percent (13%) of the targeted students in the full roster sample for the ten DPP high schools in 1986-87 were discharged as dropouts during the year. The dropout discharge rate for the uncleared schools was about twice the rate for the cleared schools, so again the actual rate for the DPP overall was probably higher than the rate obtained. When the analysis considers just the targeted students who were eligible for services on the basis of prior year absences, twenty one percent (21%) were discharged as dropouts during 1986-87. By contrast, of the students in the DPI and AIDP schools who were eligible on the basis of prior absences and who were not targeted for services, thirty nine percent (39%) were discharged as dropouts in 1986-87.

Focusing on the attendance-eligible students who were not discharged, the three DPI service delivery models -- modified systemic, modified CBO, and pure CBO -- had attendance losses that were about the same or greater than the losses for the comparison groups of non-targeted students. Only the students in the school-based model in the three AIDP schools that contained (for other students) the DPI pure CBO model, appear to have attendance results that were higher than the outcome for eligible students who were not targeted for services. Among the four models again, only the school-based AIDP model substantially improved the average proportion of courses passed by attendance-eligible targeted students.

Non-targeted but attendance-eligible students in the six modified systemic schools were discharged as dropouts in 1986-87 at almost the same rate (-37%) as the average for the non-targeted attendance-eligible students in the 36 DPI and AIDP schools altogether (39%). Likewise, the change in attendance of attendance-eligible non-targeted students in the modified systemic schools (-5%) did not differ from the change for students in the other comparison samples (-5%). The non-targeted but attendance-eligible students in the modified systemic schools had about the same loss of courses passed (estimated -5%) as the loss for the targeted attendance-eligible students in the modified CBO schools (-4%). If there is a trickle-down effect in the modified systemic schools, it is not captured in the results for students who were eligible on the basis of previous low attendance but who were not explicitly targeted for services.

Regression analyses to examine the relative effectiveness of the ten DPP schools established that one school was clearly less successful than the others, but did not identify any school that was unambiguously more successful than the others, for either attendance or courses passed. There were only a few striking differences between the outcomes for individual schools and the CBOs who worked with them.

The evaluation has found a number of different patterns of attendance and passing courses for students with different characteristics. Some of these findings are summarized below.

Targeted students whose attendance had improved in the prior year and who were therefore not attendance-eligible in 1986-87 still lost some attendance and courses passed, but not as much as targeted students overall.

Students who were listed as having met no criteria had a smaller attendance loss than would be expected, and gained in courses passed, suggesting that the program was effective for them.

Losses in courses passed were particularly sharp for students entering the ninth and tenth grades from the middle schools, while students repeating these grades tended not to have further losses; this strongly points to the need for better articulation of the curriculum between the middle schools and the high schools.

Students whose age was close to the age expected for their grade lost as much attendance and lost more in courses passed than students who were two years or more older than expected for their grade. This probably relates to the trauma experienced by students their first year in high school.

Male students lost more ground than females in courses passed, despite the fact that males attended school at the same rate as females; this points to the need to focus on the in-school behavior of males and teachers' reactions to it.

Students who had been absent more than 40 days the prior year had an average loss of 5% in attendance, while students who had been absent 40 days or less the prior year had an average loss of 13% in attendance. This is explained partly in terms of regression to the mean, but it also shows that attendance loss is not simply accounted for by students with previously low attendance.

Students who had failed 40% or more of their courses in the prior year had a substantial gain in courses passed, and students who had failed less than 40% the prior year had a large loss in courses.

Few former LTAs were identified, but these students had greater losses of attendance and courses passed than the program average, and greater than would be expected from the standpoint of the usual regression to the mean for students with very low prior year statistics.

Finally, students whose scores on the Degrees of Reading Power test were in the middle range of mid-instructional level scores did no better in average proportion of courses passed (41%) or change over the previous year (-12%) than students with lower scores (40%, -10%), while students with high DRP scores still passed only 56% of their courses and lost six percent (-6%) from the previous year. Reading ability, then, is far from a sufficient explanation for why students are receiving the grades they get.

Looking at school-wide changes, more schools decreased (eight) than increased (five) the percent of LTAs in the total school population in 1986-87 over the previous year. Only two of the thirteen DPI schools had any loss of full roster attendance between the two years, and neither of these was a school that decreased its percent of LTAs. Dropout discharges declined in eight of the thirteen schools. These patterns were not related to service models.

The frequency of suspensions for "aggressive acts by pupils against other pupils" declined between 1984-85 and 1986-87 in the DPP schools; the decline was dramatic in six schools, five of which had Project SMART.

All but one of the DPP high schools showed decreases in the number of serious incidents reported between 1984-85 and 1986-87 -- the one exception being also the school which had the greatest loss in attendance and courses passed among the ten DPP schools.

All in all, no program, model, or school has achieved a comprehensive improvement, but much is being learned that could come together. The most positive effect on the attendance and courses passed of targeted students directly in Year Two was demonstrated by the AIDP school-based model, which had a stronger instructional and scheduling strategy than any of the three DPI models (though the latter include programs like a minischool whose effects have not yet been specifically measured).

Attendance-eligible targeted students in all of the four models examined except the pure-CBO model were substantially less likely to be discharged as dropouts than eligible but non-targeted students in the same schools or in the remainder of the AIDP schools. However, in all of the models including the school-based model, the students were passing courses at less than half the rate that would be required to complete a high school education in the previously normal three or four years. How many of these students, or students like them who are now in the elementary and middle grades, will in fact graduate depends upon both program and school-wide changes that are even now only in the developmental stage. The reduced numbers of serious incidents and of discharges for peer aggression might be forerunners of these changes, along with certain areas of staff growth that the Year Three final report will describe. Though they are "systemic," these changes are not simply identified with the systemic schools as such. One dimension of development is how staff, students, families, and community work together. Another is the course of study, not only its content and method, but the arrangements that allow students to pursue their education in a different time frame from the one that has previously prevailed. The findings for different kinds of students indicate different problems that need to be solved. Students' needs and the deficiencies of the schools are much larger than the Dropout Prevention Initiative at this time. However, information that the Initiative has produced can be applied to come to grips with the problems more comprehensively than has been possible in the city school system so far.

Chapter Five

RESULTS FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY

Introduction

In this section we report on the Year Two high school student survey. We present these survey results for several reasons. First, they reflect the voice of the students. The survey responses represent the students' descriptions of their school experience, especially their experience with the Dropout Prevention Initiative. The surveys tell us students' likes and dislikes, describe the resources they bring to the school, and provide a picture of the targeted students' lives that simply is not available elsewhere.

Second, the survey results are important pieces of information to take into account in trying to understand what has worked in the Dropout Prevention Initiative and what has not. A major goal of the evaluation project is to provide recommendations about how the Initiative can be strengthened, so that many more of the students targeted for services can achieve the program's goals of higher attendance, better classroom performance, and lower dropout rates. The survey results provide a context for developing these recommendations.

In any social or educational program, it is axiomatic that for the program to be successful, the program developers and staff must know their clientele. Thus, a third reason for presenting these survey results is simply to present an objective view of the target population so that the Board of Education and the participating high schools can better understand the nature of the target population. In some cases, stereotypes of the target population may be confirmed. In many more cases, though, the stereotypes are exploded. The survey respondents are a much more diverse group than anyone could have predicted. Some like school a great deal, others do not. Some have very high expectations; others do not expect to graduate from high school. Some live in large, single-parent households; but a similar number do not. Some saw their schools as violent and disorderly; others said their schools were almost never unruly or unsafe.

In thinking about how the Dropout Prevention Program, or any other school program, should be organized, it is important to keep the role of the school in perspective. Schools are but one of the educating institutions in modern societies. Families and communities also are important educating forces, which have an impact on and are in turn affected by schools. Students who live in families and communities that have direct access to economic and educational resources have a decided advantage, in schools and classrooms as they are currently organized, over those students whose families and communities do not have such resources at their disposal. The traditional view has been that education can compensate for what have been described as disadvantages in the home and community environments of the urban poor. Yet evidence has accumulated, not only that schooling has generally failed to equalize the accomplishments of advantaged and disadvantaged youth, but that schools themselves are agents in the reproduction of society. Increasingly, schools are being held responsible for coping with the diverse social backgrounds and educational resources that students bring with them to the schools. There is no question that, for schools to be effective, they must be responsive to these variations in students' backgrounds. Specifically, diversity demands a degree of flexibility in school programs that is frequently precluded by the current organization of elementary and secondary schools.

It is in this spirit that we discuss students' reports of their social backgrounds and family environments. It is not our intention to "blame the victims." Rather, we want to describe the social backgrounds and educational resources that schools are confronting. In no way are we suggesting that schooling should be let off the hook because of the circumstances that students present to the school. Instead, we are trying to present as accurate a picture as possible of what these circumstances are, so that successful educational programs that take account of them can be developed.

Survey Administration

The Year Two high school survey was fielded in the late spring of 1987. In each of the thirteen high schools, 150 students who had been named as participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative were randomly chosen for survey administration; these students then became each school's evaluation sample (although some modifications were later made). The Teachers College evaluation team negotiated with the staffs of each high school, setting up several administrations in each high school. The response rates for these initial administrations were very disappointing, as fewer than 50 students completed surveys in several of the schools. The low response rate was due to many factors, including the lateness of the survey in the school year and the poor attendance of the target population.

An intense effort to raise the response rate focused on three high schools: Schools 4, 5 and 6. In each of these schools a survey team camped out for two to three days, and a variety of strategies were employed in the hopes of reaching the goal of complete response. In each school one location was designated as the survey area, and the survey was administered all day at that spot. Students who were invited to participate were advised of a time and date to appear at the site. They were given passes the prior day and were reminded of the administration by coordinators and CBO staff. In some cases the survey team pulled students out of class and escorted them to the survey site. In a more extended follow-up some schools offered lunch for students who participated, while others used students to help locate those selected as respondents.

The survey "blitz" did raise the response rate in the three high schools, but even with these elaborate procedures, the response rates were dismal. In many of the program high schools, the survey response rate hovered around 30%, well below social science standards. The next section addresses the magnitude of survey bias owing to the low response rate.

Nonresponse and Sample Bias

A low response rate to a survey does not necessarily invalidate the survey results. What matters more is whether the respondents resemble the nonrespondents. If the individuals who did respond to the survey are very similar to those students who did not fill out a survey, then it is reasonable to assume that their survey responses would be similar too. On the other hand, if the students who completed surveys have different characteristics than the nonrespondents, presumably their survey responses also would differ. In the first case cited above, the problem of nonresponse is unlikely to lead to appreciable sample bias. This is because the respondents are a representative (if not random) sample of the entire population. In the latter case, though, there is a substantial risk of sample bias. If the respondents differ in important ways from the nonrespondents, we cannot generalize about the entire population based on the sample of respondents.

The risk of bias in the DPI Year Two high school survey may already be obvious. This is because the most likely reason for student nonresponse is closely linked to survey responses. Students who failed to respond to the survey did so at least partly because they were not attending school during the survey period. Almost certainly, then, the nonrespondents had poorer attendance records than those students who did fill out a survey. We know that students who are poor attenders differ in many ways from students who attend school more frequently. To cite but one example, poor attenders were less likely to report receiving DPP services, because they weren't in school to receive them as often as more regular attenders.

In this section, we describe the extent of nonresponse bias in the Year Two high school survey. The bias frequently is substantial, such that the respondents were objectively more successful in school than the nonrespondents. A likely consequence of this bias is that the level of DPP services reported by the respondents overstates the quantity of services received by the target population as a whole. It also is likely that the respondents are more positive in their descriptions of their school experiences than would be true of the target population as a whole. Moreover, the family backgrounds and home environments of the respondents probably are more favorable than those of the target population as a whole.

The survey completers had substantially better attendance than the nonrespondents during the 1986-87 school year. Respondents had an attendance rate of 79% during the year, as opposed to a rate of 60% for nonrespondents. The respondents and nonrespondents also differed in their prior attendance patterns, although not as sharply. In the year prior to the survey, the respondents were present 77% of the time, while the prior attendance rate of the nonrespondents was 69%.

An interesting consequence of this pattern is that the respondents were improving their attendance at the same time that the attendance of nonrespondents was declining. The survey completers improved their attendance an average of 1.8% over the 1985-86 school year, while the nonrespondents' attendance fell by 9.4% over the same period. As is outlined elsewhere in this report, overall the program participants showed a decline of about seven to eight percent in attendance over Year Two of the Dropout Prevention Initiative. In this respect, then, the respondents cannot be considered at all representative of the entire DPP target population.

A similar difference between respondents and nonrespondents crops up for the proportion of courses students passed in their high schools. Those students who completed the survey successfully passed about three-fifths (62%) of their courses during the 1986-87 school year. But the nonrespondents passed only about a third (36%) of their courses, a very large difference. As was true for attendance, the survey respondents were improving their performance at the same time that the nonrespondents' performance was declining. The survey completers passed about 8% more of their courses in 1986-87 than they did in 1985-86, while the nonrespondents passed 6% fewer of their courses over the same period. Among program participants overall, we observed close to a 4% decline in the proportion of subjects passed in 1986-87 relative to 1985-86. Here too, then, the respondents are not at all representative of the entire DPP high school population.

These large differences between respondents and nonrespondents constrain our ability to generalize about the DPP high school target population. Our results do pertain to the types of students who did respond: better, and improving, attenders and classroom performers. But we urge extreme caution in extrapolating from these relatively well-off students to the characteristics and experience of the target population as a whole.

Student Characteristics

In this section we describe the characteristics of the responding targeted high school students. At some points we compare the high school responses with the middle school survey responses reported in the Year Two Final Report on the Middle Schools.

Like the middle school target population, the responding targeted high school students are predominantly nonwhite. Forty-four percent described themselves as black or Afro-American, and nearly the same proportion (39%) said that they were Hispanic or Spanish. An additional 4% described themselves as Asian-American or Pacific Islander. Only 4% of the respondents described themselves as white; 9% chose "other" as a descriptor.

A sizeable fraction of the respondents are exposed regularly to languages other than English. Nearly one-third (31%) of the respondents indicated that the adults in their homes speak Spanish most of the time. A smattering (7%) reported that the adults in their homes mostly speak another non-English language, such as an Asian language, French or Creole, or some other language. The respondents themselves were slightly less likely to use a language other than English in their daily activities. About three in ten (29%) spoke a non-English language most of the time at home.

Although many respondents reported exposure to non-English languages at home, some of these students apparently would prefer to speak English. Over three-quarters (76%) of the responding students reported preferring to speak English at home. An even greater fraction (85%) preferred speaking English with their friends.

Over two-fifths (41%) of the respondents reported living in a home with two parents or guardians at the time of the survey. The other 59% lived either in a home with a male parent but no female parent (5%), no parents (7%), or a female parent but no male parent (48%). This last type of household -- single parent, female head of household -- typically is associated with severe economic deprivation.

There frequently were other adults living in the home, however, as some students reported the presence of grandparents and other relatives. About one student in eight (12%) said that a grandmother lived in their home, and 8% indicated that a grandfather lived with them. Just over one-tenth (11%) reported sharing their home with an aunt, and a like proportion lived with an uncle at the time of the survey. Nearly one in four (23%) of the students said that some other adult also was living in their home on the survey date.

DPP high school respondents frequently were one of several children living in their homes. One in four (25%) was the only child living in the household. Approximately the same fraction (23%) was one of two children in the home, and an additional 23% reported that three children lived in the home as of the survey date. One in eight (13%) respondents claimed that four children lived in their homes, and another 16% said that five or more children (including the respondent) lived in their home.

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There was a wide range in household size, based on students' reports of who lived in their homes. Nearly three in 10 (29%) reported that their household consisted of three people or less. About a fifth indicated that the household had four members, and the same proportion claimed five household members. Nearly one-sixth said their household had six people living in it, while about the same fraction said that seven or more people lived in their homes.

Targeted DPP high school students indicated that their parents, stepparents, or guardians had not gone very far through school. Many respondents simply did not know how much schooling their parents had acquired. Over one-third (35%) did not know how far through school their father, stepfather, or male guardian had gone, and 22% did not know the schooling histories of their mother, stepmother, or female guardian. Of those students who did report an answer, about three-eighths (38%) said that their father, stepfather, or male guardian had not completed high school, and the same proportion indicated that their mother, stepmother, or female guardian had not completed high school. Conversely, almost one-quarter (24%) of the respondents who gave an answer said that their father, stepfather or male guardian had completed some college or other schooling after high school, and 27% claimed this was true of their mother, stepmother or female guardian.

We do not have direct evidence on the economic well-being of the respondents' families. The data cited above certainly are suggestive, however; and there is one additional bit of information which is consistent with this image of the respondents' households. This is the presence or absence of a telephone in the home. Only 82% of the respondents said that their family had its own telephone. Nationally, census data indicate that about 93% of U.S. households have a telephone. The lack of a telephone in the home almost certainly indicates severe economic need.

The image we have painted of the characteristics of targeted DPP high school students and their families represents a central tendency around conditions of relative educational and economic deprivation. However, there is a great deal of variability around this central tendency. Many targeted students live in two-parent families, for instance, and a substantial number have parents who have completed high school themselves, and perhaps sought further schooling. We would probably characterize very few of these families as socioeconomically advantaged, but there clearly are gradations in the social and economic resources available to the students in their homes.

Most of the targeted high school students are ninth and tenth graders, and many are one or two years overage for grade. Consequently, a substantial number of the respondents are in the latter stages of adolescence, and preparing to enter adult family and work life. The vast majority (82%) had worked for pay (not counting work around the house) by the time of the survey, and one-quarter were working for pay at the time of the survey. An additional 19% had worked for pay at some earlier point during the 1986-87 school year.

Many of the respondents were working long hours at their current or most recent job. Of those reporting working for pay, 20% had worked 31 hours per week or more at their current or most recent job. An additional 24% had worked 21 to 30 hours per week at their current or most recent job. When we consider just those respondents who reported working during the 1986-87 school year, the picture is very similar. About 46% of those students who reported working during the school year were working at least 20 hours per week.

The DPP high school population also is heavily involved in traditional adolescent courtship activities. More than half (53%) reported that there is a particular person with whom they went out regularly, or with whom they were going steady, or to whom they were engaged or married. More than half (55%) said that they went out with a girlfriend or boyfriend at least once a week, and almost a quarter (24%) claimed to go out every day or almost every day.

Almost two-thirds (63%) of those choosing to respond indicated that they were sexually active (a sizeable proportion chose not to respond to this question). While many respondents planned to defer childbearing until young adulthood, 8% reported that they had already had their first child by the time of the survey. These figures are well in line with other sources of information on the sexual activity and fertility of inner-city teenagers.

As we noted for the middle school target population, there is a sharp disjuncture between the educational expectations of DPP high school students and their probable educational attainments. Only 9% think that they will fail to complete high school. Almost two-thirds (63%) expect to obtain some further schooling after high school, and 38% believe that they will finish college or obtain even more schooling than that.

One-half (50%) of the respondents want to go to college, business or trade school in the year after they leave high school. Only 20% anticipate getting a job immediately upon leaving school. One-sixth (16%) want to join the armed forces. Five percent want to do something else, and the remaining 8% did not know what they want to do most in the year after they leave high school.

These expectations are striking in light of how these youngsters and their peers typically fare in the education system. For instance, across New York City high schools, between one-third and one-half of all students are discharged as dropouts prior to graduation. Even higher proportions of the most at-risk students are likely to be discharged as dropouts. The DPP target population largely is drawn from this most at-risk group; and yet only 9% believe that they will not complete high school. It is hard to reconcile this discrepancy.

No one would suggest that the way to resolve the gap between at-risk students' high expectations and their low performance is to lower their expectations. These expectations may reflect students' very real feelings about what they should, are entitled to, or want to accomplish in school. But the fact is that these high expectations are unlikely to be realized. One reason may be that expectations alone do not necessarily generate the student behaviors, or the resources and support from other persons or the school, that would enable the expectations to come to fruition. The high expectations that these young people hold are not merely reflections of individual students' levels of ambition and motivation, but also are a function of the cues emitted by families, schools, and communities. Each of these educating institutions is partly accountable for encouraging high expectations on the part of at-risk youth without giving them the resources and support necessary to realize their goals. As we concluded for the middle school group, further research is needed on the social forces, both in school and out, which lead to high expectations, and how schools can channel these expectations to enable at-risk youth to have a chance to reach their goals.

School Environment

Most models of effective schools highlight the importance of a safe, orderly climate. We therefore asked targeted high school students about their perceptions of the quantity and quality of disorder in their schools. Many students report that their schools are the scene of violence at least some of the time. Most of this violent activity involves disputes among students, but some also includes teachers or other adults in the schools.

For example, one-third (33%) of the respondents said that they saw a student hit or attack another student almost every week, and more than half (53%) indicated that this occurred at least once a month. A much smaller proportion reported seeing a student hit or attack a teacher, but the figures still are disturbingly high. Over 40% reported seeing a student hit or attack a teacher at least once during the school year, and one student in eight (12%) reported that this happened at least once a month. Many more students claimed to have seen a student physically threaten a teacher during the school year. One-fifth (20%) said that this happened almost every week, and an additional 17% reported that they had seen a student physically threaten a teacher at least once a month. Fewer than a third (31%) claimed that they had never seen a student physically threaten a teacher in the 1986-87 school year.

A much smaller number of respondents reported seeing an adult at the school physically threaten a student. Just under a fifth (18%) said that this happened at least once a month, and 8%

answered that they had seen an adult physically threaten a student almost every week. All told, 45% of the responding students had seen an adult physically threaten a student at least once during the 1986-87 school year.

The respondents themselves were occasionally involved in threatening situations. More than two-fifths (41%) had to fight to protect themselves at school at least once during the school year. This was a relatively infrequent occurrence for most of these youth, however. Only 7% reported having to fight to protect themselves at school almost every week, and an additional 7% said they had to fight to protect themselves about once a month during the 1986-87 school year. Most (53%) said that they were never afraid that someone would hurt or bother them at school. Fewer than a quarter (23%) replied that they were afraid sometimes or most of the time that someone would disturb them at school, and just 6% said that this was a problem most of the time. The respondents reported a very similar pattern when describing how often they were afraid that someone would hurt or bother them on the way to or from school.

Curiously, the high school DPP respondents report somewhat lower levels of violence and disorder than the middle school respondents. The responding high school students also were less afraid of being bothered at or on the way to or from school than were the middle school respondents. This comparison must be interpreted in light of the response rates and characteristics of the middle school and high school survey samples. The middle school sample is demonstrably more representative of the middle school target population than is the high school sample. It may be that the high school sample is so highly selected that it omits large numbers of students who would describe the school as less orderly and more violent than those students who were in school to respond to the survey. A limitation of this view, however, is that higher achieving students report the same levels of disorder within their schools as lower achieving students do, though they are not affected by it as much. Another interpretation of the difference between the high school and middle school reports is that older students are more adapted to the conditions in the schools and perceive conditions to be more normal that younger students would see as more exceptional.

The level of school disorder sometimes disrupts classroom instructional activities. Three-quarters of the respondents said that at least some of the time there was so much noise in the hall that they could not keep their minds on class. Close to one-quarter (22%) replied that this was almost always the case. The noise level within the classroom also interfered with instruction. Three-quarters of the respondents indicated that at least some of the time there was so much noise in class that the teacher could not teach. Just under a fifth (18%) said that this was almost always true.

Another common theme in effective schools models is that teachers and administrators should hold high expectations for

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students' performance. We assessed this by asking students how much of the time their teachers think that they are slow learners. Most of the respondents said that their teachers almost never thought that they were slow learners. Only one in eight (13%) thought that this was true "a lot" or nearly always, and just 6% felt that this was nearly always true. From the student's vantage point, then, their teachers did hold relatively high expectations for their performance.

Students also frequently reported a positive social bond with their teachers. Four out of five (80%) said that teachers in their school sometimes or almost always treated students with respect, and nearly a quarter (24%) said this was almost always true. Five out of six (83%) of the respondents reported that their teachers really listened to what they had to say sometimes or almost always. More than a third (34%) said that this was true almost always. Most (81%) of the responding students said that teachers in their school cared about the students at least some of the time, and nearly three in ten (29%) indicated that this was almost always true. And, finally, the respondents reported that their teachers would occasionally do things that made students feel put down. About one-fifth (21%) thought this was almost never true, but almost the same proportion (19%) felt that this was almost always true.

Students had relatively mixed feelings about their high school principals. Most (51%) liked their principal fairly much. About one-quarter (23%) liked their principal very much, and about the same proportion (26%) didn't like their principal at all. Students tended to dislike their principal more than they disliked their teachers, classes, fellow students, or the school overall. We also asked students how frequently the principal left the office to talk with students. The respondents reported that this was a relatively rare event. Less than one-fifth (18%) said that this was almost always true, and slightly more than half (56%) found this true at least some of the time. Forty-four percent of the respondents claimed that their principal almost never got out of the office and talked with the students.

Students Reports of DPP Services

As in the middle school survey, we asked DPP high school students about their experiences with several DPP program components, including attendance incentives, guidance and counseling, health services, extended day programs, career education, and tutoring. We are, however, unable to link these various activities directly to the DPP program. This is largely because students typically do not know the source of the services they receive, and would not be able to distinguish DPP services from other school services. Since the services reported by students include both DPP and non-DPP activities, we can think of these reports as upper bounds on the quantity of DPP services, as seen through students' eyes.

We first consider attendance incentives. The DPP program employed at least three different types of incentives for improving student attendance: prizes (like a t-shirt or calculator), awards (like a certificate), and school trips. We asked students if they had received any of these incentives. Many of the respondents had. Almost a third (30%) reported receiving a prize, and slightly more than a third (38%) reported receiving an award like a certificate for improving their attendance. Close to one-half (44%) of the respondents said that they had gone on a school trip in the 1986-87 school year.

These proportions are generally similar to those reported by targeted middle school students, with the exception of school trips. Two-thirds (66%) of the middle school respondents reported going on a school trip, while only 44% of the high school respondents claimed to have done this.

We asked the students how receiving an attendance incentive like a prize, award or trip made them feel. The vast majority of those receiving an incentive found it a positive experience. A total of 41% said it made them very happy, and an additional 46% reported that "it was kind of nice." Only 8% said they didn't really care, and the remaining 6% couldn't remember how it made them feel.

A majority of the respondents reported receiving some kind of health care during the school year. Nearly four out of five students (78%) had been to a health clinic, either at school or in the neighborhood, during the 1986-87 school year. Of these, about one-half made only one or two visits. Two students in five (40%) reported going to a health clinic about once a month or more. Much smaller numbers of students reported talking with a teacher, counselor or other adult in the school about their health problems or needs during the school year. Only 37% of the respondents replied that they had done this at least once. One student in six (17%) had health discussions at school about once a month, and half as many (9%) talked about their health problems to an adult at the school almost every week.

We asked students about their experiences with other kinds of counseling than health counseling as well. A majority of students receiving some kind of individualized or group counseling, but in most cases it was sporadic. Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents reported talking one-on-one with a teacher, counselor or other adult in the school about problems at school or at home at least once during the school year. But only one in three (33%) had individualized sessions as frequently as once a month. About one student in five (19%) had one-on-one counseling sessions almost every week.

Group counseling was less frequent than individualized counseling, according to student reports. Less than one-half (44%) of the respondents reported having met in a group with other students to talk about problems at school or at home at least once during the school year. Overall, one-quarter (25%)

reported having these kinds of sessions at least once a month, and one student in six (16%) reported group counseling almost every week.

It is possible, of course, that students have very different perceptions of what constitutes a counseling session than do teachers or counselors. But there is little evidence of this kind of bias in student reports. The DPP program was largely envisioned as a guidance-and-counseling-intensive enterprise, in which students would receive a steady stream of social support to deal with their problems both in school and out. The students' reports of guidance and counseling sessions belie this image. Only a fraction of the respondents report individualized or group guidance sessions as frequently as once a month, and far fewer had these kinds of contacts almost every week. Moreover, these figures are for the respondents, whom we believe to be more likely to have received services than those students who did not respond to the survey. We conclude that a very small proportion of the high school target population in fact received what can be described as intensive guidance and counseling services.

Less than half (42%) of the respondents report participating in extended-day programs during the school year. Less than one-quarter (23%) said they went to a program at the school before or after school hours as frequently as once a month, and only 14% indicated going to such a program almost every week. The rate of participating in extended-day programs that the high school respondents report is less than that reported by the middle school respondents. A total of 57% of the middle school respondents reported attending a before- or after-school program at least once, compared to the 42% figure reported above for the high school respondents.

As was true for the middle school respondents, relatively few high school respondents reported having worked with a tutor on their schoolwork during the 1986-87 school year. More than three-quarters (77%) had no contact with an academic tutor during the year. Only one student in nine (11%) reported working with a tutor once a month or more, and only half of these (6%) worked with a tutor almost every week. Academic tutoring thus is a little-used strategy for managing the academic problems of low-achieving DPP high school students.

Career education was a much more salient instructional component in the DPP program than was academic tutoring. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the respondents reported that they spent at least some time during the school year learning about different kinds of jobs or careers. For most of these respondents, however, this was not a common activity. Just over a third (36%) indicated learning about different kinds of jobs about once a month or more during the school year, and one student in five (20%) said they learned about different kinds of jobs or careers almost every week. These proportions line up fairly closely with the reports of the middle school respondents.

Although most responding students reported learning about different kinds of jobs or careers, much smaller numbers actually worked with a group that learned how to run a business. Only about a third (36%) had even one contact with such a group, and only one-half of these (18%) worked with this kind of group as often as once a month. Just 9% of the respondents worked with a group that learned how to run a business on a weekly basis. This form of career education can be characterized as intensive for just a very small fraction of the DPP high school target group.

Many students reported that someone working in or with the school had helped them with finding a job. More than two students in five (41%) said that this was true. Of these, about one-half indicated that the job was in their neighborhood, and the other half said that the job was outside of their neighborhood. In light of the data on students' work histories, it seems as though a substantial number of those students who were working during the school year had received help from the school in finding their jobs.

We asked the middle school sample about their experience with linkage activities. We posed similar questions to the high school group, asking them about linkage activities during their last year of intermediate or junior high school. We asked the students specifically about linkages to their current high school, and not more generally to any high school. These reports do not as a rule represent the linkage activities of the DPP program, but rather a picture of what was in place prior to the program.

The students' reports suggest that there were not firm linkages between the intermediate or junior high schools they attended and the high schools in which they eventually enrolled. Nearly three-quarters (72%) reported listening to students or adults from the high school talk about what the high school is like. But only about a third (34%) had gone with a class to visit the high school, and the same proportion had gone to a special event at the high school. Less than one student in five (18%) had gone to the high school for after-school activities.

We also asked the high school sample about their initial experiences at their high school. Here again, many of these students initially attended their current high school prior to the onset of the DPP program, so their early high school experiences should not be attributed simply to the DPP program.

The responding high school students do not report the transition to high school to be as stressful as is commonly believed. True, almost two-thirds (64%) did report feeling confused and unsure about what was going on. But almost half (46%) said that older students helped them learn about the school, and only 28% reported that there was no one to talk to. Less than two in five (38%) of the responding students claimed that the classes were a lot harder than what they were used to. Finally, almost two-thirds (63%) indicated that a teacher or counselor explained school rules or procedures to them when they first came to their high school.

Once again it is important to remember that the respondents were students who were relatively successful in the school. Among this group, many students claimed that entering high school was not that difficult, even without formal socialization structures in place. It is an open question whether less successful students might benefit from a more formal socialization process in which, for example, all students have school rules and procedures explained to them.

Student Absence and the School's Response

The close linkage between students' attendance and dropout status is well-known. Students with poor attendance histories are at great risk of dropping out of high school. In many respects, then, dropout prevention programs are necessarily attendance improvement programs. Understanding why students are absent from school may be important for understanding why students drop out of school. Moreover, studying the ways in which schools respond to absence among high-risk students may shed light on how schools can help keep those students in school.

Most Year Two DPP high school students had poor attendance histories. Many targeted students continued to miss many days of school during the program year. We asked students to tell us why they were absent from school, by presenting them a list of possible reasons, and asking them to indicate the number of days they were absent from school in the 1986-87 due to each reason. For each reason, students responded "never", "1 to 10 days", or "more than 10 days".

There is no simple set of reasons which accounts for student absence from school. The students' responses suggest that a variety of factors influence students' decisions to come to school or not. Each of the ten reasons we presented to the respondents accounted for some portion of the overall amount of absence from school reported by the target group.

The students' reports do call into question some of the conventional wisdom about why students' attendance is so poor in New York City high schools. For instance, it is commonly believed that there is a great deal of geographic mobility among the Hispanic population in New York, so that students are frequently migrating between New York City and their country of origin, and missing school in the process. The respondents' answers suggest this is a relatively rare phenomenon. Only 12% of the respondents said that they had ever been absent from school during the 1986-87 year because their family moved away for a while. Only 4% said that they had missed over 10 days of school for this reason. (There is, of course, the possibility that such mobile youth would largely have been survey nonrespondents.)

A second common belief is that at-risk high school students in New York City frequently miss school because they have to work. Here too the evidence provides weak support for this notion. Only one respondent in six (16%) reported having missed school because he or she had to work. Only one in twenty (5%) claimed to have missed more than 10 days due to having to work. Again, of course, we must recall that students responding to the survey typically had better attendance than those who did not; we do not know whether nonrespondents were absent from school because they were working.

It also is commonly held that urban high school students frequently are absent to tend to home responsibilities -- taking care of an older relative or younger sibling, or dealing with family problems. While many students reported occasionally missing school for these reasons, few noted them as an explanation for prolonged absences. One-third (33%) of the respondents said that they missed at least one day in the 1986-87 school year because they had to take care of someone at home. Slightly more (36%) said they missed at least a day because they had problems at home. But only 3% said they missed more than 10 days because they had to take care of someone at home, and only 7% reported missing more than 10 days because of problems at home.

By far the most common explanation for absence from school was student illness. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the respondents said they missed at least one day of school because they were sick. One in six (16%) reported missing more than 10 days of school due to illness. The next most common reason respondents cited for school absence was that they "just didn't feel like going." More than half (54%) missed at least one day of school for this reason; one respondent in eight (12%) missed more than 10 days of school because he or she just didn't feel like going to school.

Some students cut school to be with their peers. More than a third (38%) were absent at least once because they wanted to do something with friends. Nearly one-tenth (9%) of the respondents were absent more than 10 days for this reason. Conversely, a small group of students were absent from school to avoid a group of their peers. About one respondent in seven (14%) was absent at least once because of problems with another student or group of students. But only 2% of the students reported that this problem accounted for more than 10 absences. Very similar numbers of students reported missing school because of problems with a teacher or other adult at school.

Finally, a small number of students were absent from school because they had been suspended. One in nine (11%) reported missing at least one day of school due to suspension. But only 2% of the respondents reported being suspended from school for more than 10 days during the 1986-87 school year.

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While students' own interpretations of past absences are quite important, the schools' response to those absences may affect students' absenteeism in the future. We asked students what the school did when they were absent from school many days during the 1986-87 school year. By far the most common school response to persistent absenteeism was to send a letter to the student's home. Nearly seven-eighths (86%) of the respondents reported this response; one-tenth (10%) said a letter was not sent home, and 5% did not know.

In many cases, respondents reported that a parent or guardian was asked to come to the school after they had been absent a lot of days. Nearly one-half (47%) indicated that the school requested a parental visit; 40% said that the school did not ask a parent or guardian to come to school, and 13% did not know.

The least frequent strategy among the three we inquired about was a home visit. Just under a quarter (22%) of the respondents said that when they were absent from school a lot of days during the 1986-87 school year, someone from the school visited their home. Most (62%) of the respondents reported that no one from the school visited their home after prolonged absence; 16% of the respondents did not know.

The high schools' response to persistent absences differs somewhat from that of the middle schools. The middle schools were much less likely to send a letter home, but much more likely to employ home visits. While 86% of the high school respondents reported that the school sent a letter in response to continual absence from school, only 67% of the middle school respondents cited the use of a letter sent to their home. Conversely, while 22% of the high school respondents reported that someone from the school visited their home after a prolonged absence, 40% of the middle school respondents reported the use of home visits.

The apparent substitution of sending letters home versus home visits may simply reflect a shortage of resources. After all, students tend to be absent more in high school than in middle school, and there may not be enough personnel available to carry out the greater number of home visits needed at the high school level. Still, this pattern is disquieting, because it involves the substitution of a relatively weak school response (a letter) for a relatively strong school response (a home visit). Most educators view home visits to be an active, interested school strategy, while a letter is a passive, disinterested strategy, perhaps less effective for this reason.

We also asked students about what happened after their most recent absence prior to the survey administration. Here too the responses indicate that schools relied most heavily on less labor-intensive strategies like sending letters or making phone calls (some of which were automated). About two-thirds (64%) of the respondents said that the school sent a letter to their home after their most recent absence, and two-fifths (40%) reported that the school called their home. Just 11% of the respondents claimed that someone from the school visited their home after their last absence (contrast this with the 23% of the middle school respondents reporting a home visit).

Just over three-fifths (62%) of the respondents said that after their most recent absence a teacher, counselor or other adult in the school asked them where they had been. Relatively few reported an unpleasant interpersonal response to their absence. Only 14% of the students indicated that when they came back to school, a teacher was mad at them or put them down in class. It may be purely due to a lack of personnel to go around, but for many students the institutional response to absence is indifference. The 1986-87 DPP program did not conform closely to the dropout prevention model specifying close, "mentoring" relationships between adults in the school and at-risk students -- at least not for many students.

In addition to absenteeism, lateness and class cutting are persistent problems in urban high schools. The DPP respondents frequently were late to school. Close to one-third (29%) were at least one period late to school almost every day they attended. An additional 27% were late about once a week, and 19% more were late once or twice a month. Overall, 89% of the respondents had been late to school at least once, but for a substantial number of these, tardiness was the rule rather than the exception.

Class cutting was also problematic, but not as severe as tardiness. Almost one respondent in five (18%) said that almost every day they went to school they cut at least one of their classes. Slightly more (21%) said that they cut one or more classes about once a week, and 20% cut a class once or twice a month. All told, 73% of the respondents had cut at least one class between the beginning of the school year and the date of the survey administration.

Most students reported that when they returned to class after a long absence, they received help in catching up on missed work. About a third (32%) said that usually the teacher helped them catch upon work they missed. The same percentage said that usually another student helped them catch up, and 7% said that someone else typically helped them catch up on missed work. Just 5% reported that they didn't need to catch up on any work after a long absence, and 23% of the respondents said that they received no help, but just fell behind.

Student Attitudes toward School

We also asked DPP high school students about how much they liked their high schools. These attitudes presumably reflect both their DPP experiences and their other experiences in the school. There is, however, no way to disentangle the unique contributions of participating in DPP to these attitudes toward the high schools. Thus, these attitudes should be thought of as a snapshot of how the responding targeted high school students perceived their high schools at the time of the survey administration, late in the 1986-87 school year.

Most students liked going to their classes. Nearly half (46%) said they liked going to all of the classes they were taking at the time of the survey, and an additional 35% liked going to most of their classes. Over 90% reported liking to go to at least half of their classes. Only 3% of the respondents reported liking none of their classes.

In spite of this enthusiasm, students did not always like their classwork. Nearly half claimed that they don't enjoy the work they do in class, and more than half complained that they didn't get to learn about things they were interested in during their classes. About a quarter felt that schoolwork was mostly dull and boring, and one respondent in five described their classwork as "just busy work and a waste of time."

Most respondents described their schools in a positive light. Almost one in five described their relationship with the school as "good friends". An additional 36% likened it to "friends", and a quarter (25%) to "distant relatives". Just 12% considered themselves to be strangers to the school, and 8% described the school and themselves as enemies. Moreover, 22% indicated that they liked the school very much, and 60% more liked the school fairly much. Only 18% of the respondents claimed not to like the school at all.

Although the respondents are generally favorably disposed toward the school, they don't always enjoy their time in school. Doubtless this is partly due to their histories of academic failure. A steady diet of poor performance would be enough to daunt even the hardiest adolescent. The problem is compounded by the gap respondents perceived between their efforts and their school performance. Half (49%) of the respondents felt that they never got the grades they deserved no matter how hard they tried. Also, 35% agreed that when they didn't do well in school, they usually couldn't figure out why. These perceptions presumably are the product of the interaction of the students with the school environment, and both may contribute to this gap.

Moreover, many DPP respondents were aware of their academic shortcomings. Nearly half (45%) thought that their schoolwork was not very good most of the time. A slightly smaller number (38%) reported that they often felt unsuccessful in school. It is little wonder that fewer than half (47%) responded "nearly always" or "most of the time" to a question asking how often they were very happy when in school. Indeed, a slight majority (53%) agreed that most of the time they did not want to go to school. What is intriguing is that many of these students claimed to like the school and their classes. Perhaps these students were less vulnerable to the negative feelings or forces that they reported than were the students who were not represented as strongly in the survey sample. While our survey results cannot address this directly, we do intend to pursue related lines of research, and to extend the types of analyses we have reported here.

Chapter Six

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM COSTS, 1986-87

This chapter will present the overall administrative and school-level budgets and expenditures for the high school portion of the Dropout Prevention Initiative during 1986-87. Cost comparisons will be made among individual schools, CBOs, and program models.

Limitations of the Cost Analysis

At the outset of this chapter, two limitations of the analysis must be made clear. The first concerns the analysis of costs for specific program services or components (facilitation, guidance, security, etc.). For our analysis of the 1985-86 program, we had used very rough estimates of schools' emphases on the various components or activities in developing a breakdown of costs by program components in the different schools. This year, we felt that this same type of analysis would yield no new information, and instead attempted to combine a breakdown of staff time allocated to different components with a more complete accounting of staff costs, and to do the same with Other than Personnel Services (OTPS) funds. Unfortunately, in nearly every school, the staff members who were reported to us, by the schools themselves, as having been part of the DPI program were not the same staff listed on DPI payrolls at the central Board.

Our disappointment in not being able to obtain consistent, accurate, program expenditure data for a cost analysis was moderated by the realization that, due to quite different patterns of implementation across the thirteen school sites, it would be very difficult to develop a general cost estimate of each program component. For example, program resources for attendance outreach in one school include over ten family workers, plus student aides and the automated attendance system -- along with the regular school resources devoted to this activity; in other schools, the configuration is quite different. In effect, we would have needed to develop costs for six or seven program components in thirteen schools, and to somehow sort out the true costs for each component versus just those contributed by the Dropout Prevention Initiative. Furthermore, as we will discuss in greater detail below, even if exact costs were known, determining a unit value of costs -- specifically, per pupil costs -- is extremely problematic, given the lack across schools of a consistent method for identifying program participants. Finally, since we have thus far been unable to establish that different program services have had strong effects, knowing their exact costs seems superfluous. It is as yet unclear whether any one type of activity is more effective than another, and certainly we do not know how effective activities would be if removed from the context of the general program and all other activities.

This latter point relates to the second major limitation of the cost analysis -- the absence of observed program effects that can be included in a cost-effectiveness analysis at this time. As we have discussed at length in Chapter Four, we found no evidence that, in 1986-87, DPI program students showed changes in their attendance and courses passed that were any better than those for comparable non-program students. The program participants did have lower rates of being discharged as dropouts than the rates for other attendance-eligible students in the schools. However, it would be misleading to relate program costs to this effect alone.

It may be that there are indeed other effects that can be attributed to certain aspects of the Initiative (and our Year Three analysis is focused on just this issue). Furthermore, program effects may emerge when we compare the performance of the three cohorts representing the first three years of the program, or when we follow a longitudinal panel of students who have participated in the program for more than one year. At that point, a cost-effectiveness analysis would be more appropriate. At this time, however, we have restricted our cost analysis to a description of the total program budgets and expenditures across schools, highlighting some of the budget-related issues that have implications for program policy-making.

Data Sources

Budget and expenditure data for the Dropout Prevention Initiative in the high schools were less centralized and thus more difficult to obtain than for the middle schools. While school and CBO budget information was received from three main sources, the DPP central office, the Division of High Schools, and the Office of Funded Programs, the Board does not customarily calculate expenditures by school for the DPI. Hence, the costs for the Summer Institute personnel, school-year payroll, hourly/per session personnel, automated attendance, central administrative staff, central OTPS, and CBO contracted services were kept categorically rather than by school, and had to be sorted out and re-pieced together into school level totals. This necessitated visits or contacts with numerous offices and individuals within the Chancellor's office, Office of Budget Operations and Review, Office of Budget Management, High School OTPS, DPP office, AIDP high school office, and others, and involved as well some chance of duplication and/or omission.

Because it has been customary since the early 1970s for New York City school budgets to be developed on the basis of personnel "units" rather than real costs -- i.e., constant salary amounts for teachers, guidance counselors, and other personnel categories indexed to an average teacher salary -- the budget figures we report for the school portions of the DPI reflect these standardized unit values. However, the expenditure figures we report for the school and CBO programs are based on real costs as reported on school payrolls, CBO invoices, and so on. As we showed in our analysis of middle school program costs, while logically it seems inappropriate to compare unit-based budgets with real-cost expenditures, on average the comparisons are valid.

Program Funding

As with the middle schools, public funding for DPI in Year Two came from three primary sources: reimbursable funds through the state's AIDP program, the city's special 0832 tax levy for the Dropout Prevention Initiative, and the city's regular school tax levy. Following the pattern for the middle schools, the city provided more than twice as much support as the state for the 13 high schools included in the Initiative (Table 6-1a).

AIDP Reimbursable Funds. In addition to the $1,672,570 in state AIDP reimbursable funds made available to the DPI's middle school program, another $2,935,955 was allocated to operation of the DPI at the high school level. Of this, $154,762 was budgeted for central administration and $2,781,193 for the 13 DPI high schools. The greatest portion of the school funding -- i.e. $2,531,610 -- was earmarked for FEGS's Operation Success program in the seven schools of the pure and modified CBO models. The balance was for increases in 12 other CBO contracts to cover inflation and annualization, and specific school activities in the three AIDP/pure CBO schools.

City 0832 Tax Levy. Information made available to our office gives differing amounts for that portion of the DPI high school budget which was funded from the city's special 0832 tax levy. According to staff in the city's Office of Management and Budget, $5.1 million out of a total $10.2 million allocated for the BOE's dropout prevention program was earmarked for the high school program. Staff in BOE's Office of Budget Operations and Review, however, reported that $5.179 million was budgeted for the high schools, while documents from their office show a $5.355 million allocation for high schools. Our tally of the high school and CBO budgets themselves bring the total 0832 budget estimate for the high schools to $6,359,338.

City Non-0832 Tax Levy. In addition to allocations for DPI from special city and state funds, regular city tax levy funds of $194,529 were made available for central administration and another $185,143 for school personnel in the three AIDP/pure CBO schools.

The total 1986-87 DPI allocation from all three sources was $9,325,674 for the 13 high schools and $349,291 for central program management, bringing the high school DPI budget total to $9,674,965. The relative total contributions were $2,935,955

Table 6-1

Overall DPI Allocations/Budgets and Costs to Funding Sources
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

	Table 6-1a ALLOCATIONS/BUDGETS BY FUNDING SOURCE				Table 6-1b EXPENDITURES BY FUNDING SOURCE			
CATEGORY	0832 TAX LEVY	REG.CITY TAX LEVY	AIDP	TOTAL AUTHORIZATION	0832 TAX LEVY	REG.CITY TAX LEVY	AIDP	TOTALS
HIGH SCHOOLS								
SCHOOL PROGRAM:								
10 DPP HS PROGRAM	$5,239,601	$0	$0	$5,239,601	$4,589,384	$0	$0	$4,589,384
3 AIDP HS PROGRAM	$0	$185,143	$64,096	$249,239	$0	$185,143	$64,096	$249,239
CBO PROGRAM:								
FEGS/OS	$0	$0	$2,531,610	$2,531,610	$0	$0	$2,398,331	$2,398,331
OTHER CBO	$1,119,737	$0	$185,487	$1,305,224	$1,050,383	$0	$185,487	$1,235,870
H.S. SUBTOTAL:	$6,359,338	$185,143	$2,781,193	$9,325,674	$5,639,767	$185,143	$2,647,914	$8,472,824
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION								
PERSONNEL	$0	$169,971	$154,762	$324,733	$0	$165,130	$71,474	$236,604
OTPS	n/a	$24,558	$0	$24,558	$172,723	$21,242	$0	$193,965
CEN.ADMIN.SUBTOTAL:	$0	$194,529	$154,762	$349,291	$172,723	$186,372	$71,474	$430,569
GRAND TOTAL:	$6,359,338	$379,672	$2,935,955	$9,674,965	$5,812,490	$371,515	$2,719,388	$8,903,393

(30%) from state AIDP; $6,359,338 (66%) from 0832 tax levy; and $379,673 (4%) from non-0832 tax levy (Figure 6-1).

School and Model Budgets

In contrast to the middle schools, funding levels for the DPI high schools varied in relation to the size of the student body showing at-risk factors (and thus eligible for program services) and the type of program approach, or model, assigned to the school. For the most part, budgets were higher in those schools that were assessed as having larger numbers of at-risk students. These schools were generally expected to provide some combination of school-wide, or systemic, dropout prevention programming along with case management services targeted to a designated pool of eligible students. These schools were assigned to the pure systemic and modified systemic program models, and their 1986-87 program budgets ranged from $677,605 to $1,100,637. The totals for the six schools comprised 57% of the overall DPI budget in the 13 high schools. Schools determined to have a smaller number of at-risk, eligible students were not expected to program as extensively on a school-wide basis; their overall program budgets were generally lower, and most of their funds were earmarked for CBO-delivered services. Total 1986-87 budgets for schools in the pure and modified CBO models ranged from a low of $404,506 to a high of $750,149, for a combined 43% for the DPI school budget (Figure 6-2).

Did the Year Two allocations to the schools reflect the schools' relative levels of need? In general, the allocations for 1986-87 were based on incremental increases over Year One budgets, with some discretionary adjustments based on schools' plans for Year Two activities. The Year One budgets had been derived from an allocation of $1000 per targeted at-risk student. The original numbers of targeted students were based on a formula that multiplied the total number of students in a school by the school's dropout rate averaged over the most recent three year period. Table 6-2 shows those original estimates, along with the number of attendance-eligible students we determined to be present in each school during 1986-87, and the program budgets for 1986-87. A look at this table reveals some large discrepancies between initial estimates of the at-risk population, and the number of at-risk students found on school registers in 1986-87. Seven schools were found to have over 200 more attendance-eligible students in 1986-87 than their initial estimates indicated, and one school had almost 300 fewer. Given these differences, it is not surprising to then find significant differences between schools' rank order in terms of number of eligible students and their rank order on size of program budget. For example, School 2 was found to have had the largest number of attendance-eligible students on its register in 1986-87, but had only the eighth largest program budget. The largest budget went to School 5, which had the fifth largest number of attendance-eligible students. Only in Schools 3, 4, 7, and 13 did the number of attendance-eligible students and the program budget

Figure 6-1

HIGH SCHOOL FUNDING SOURCES

DPI, 1986-87

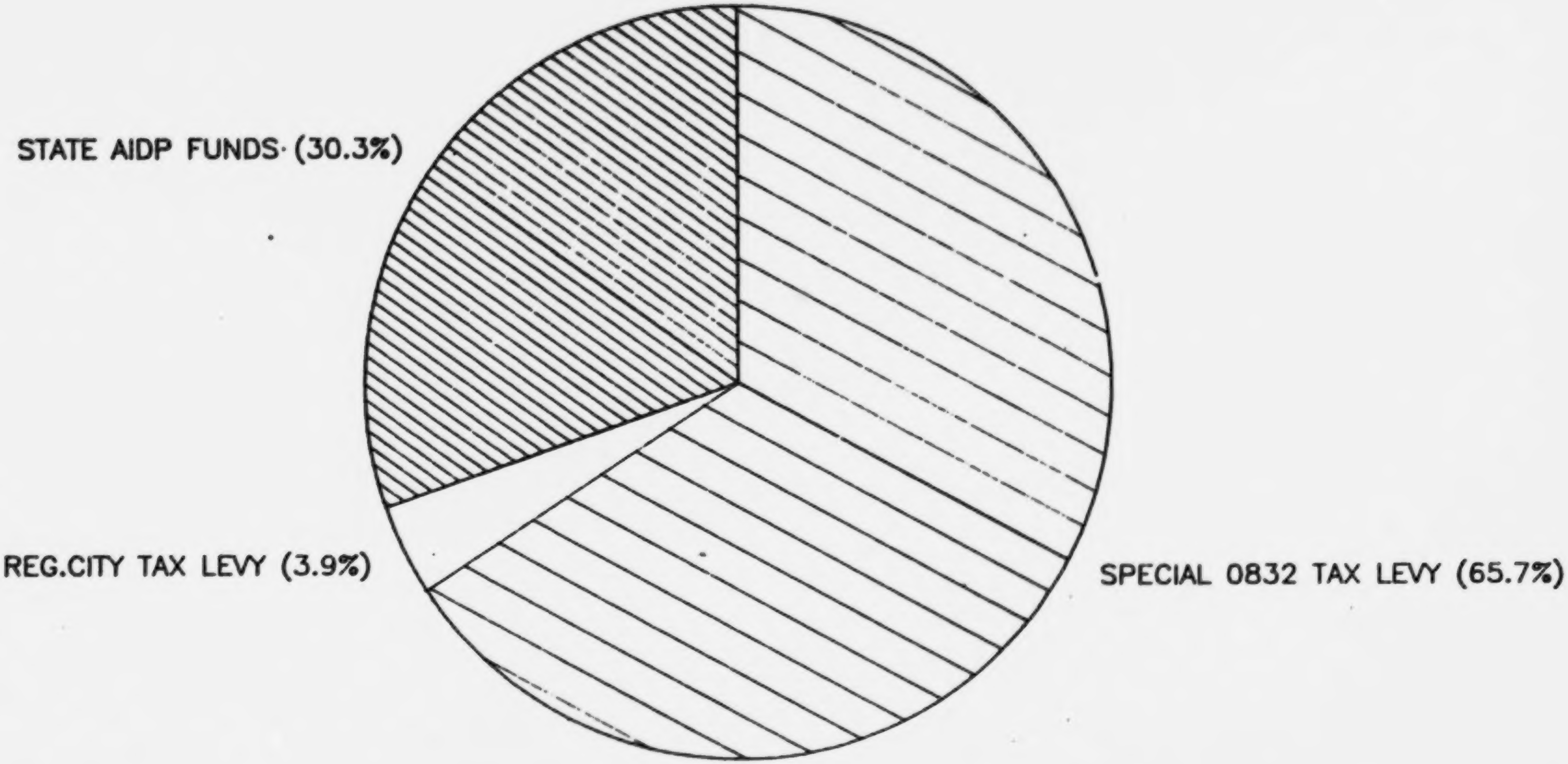

Figure 6-2

TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATED TO MODELS

DPI HIGH SCHOOLS, 1986-87

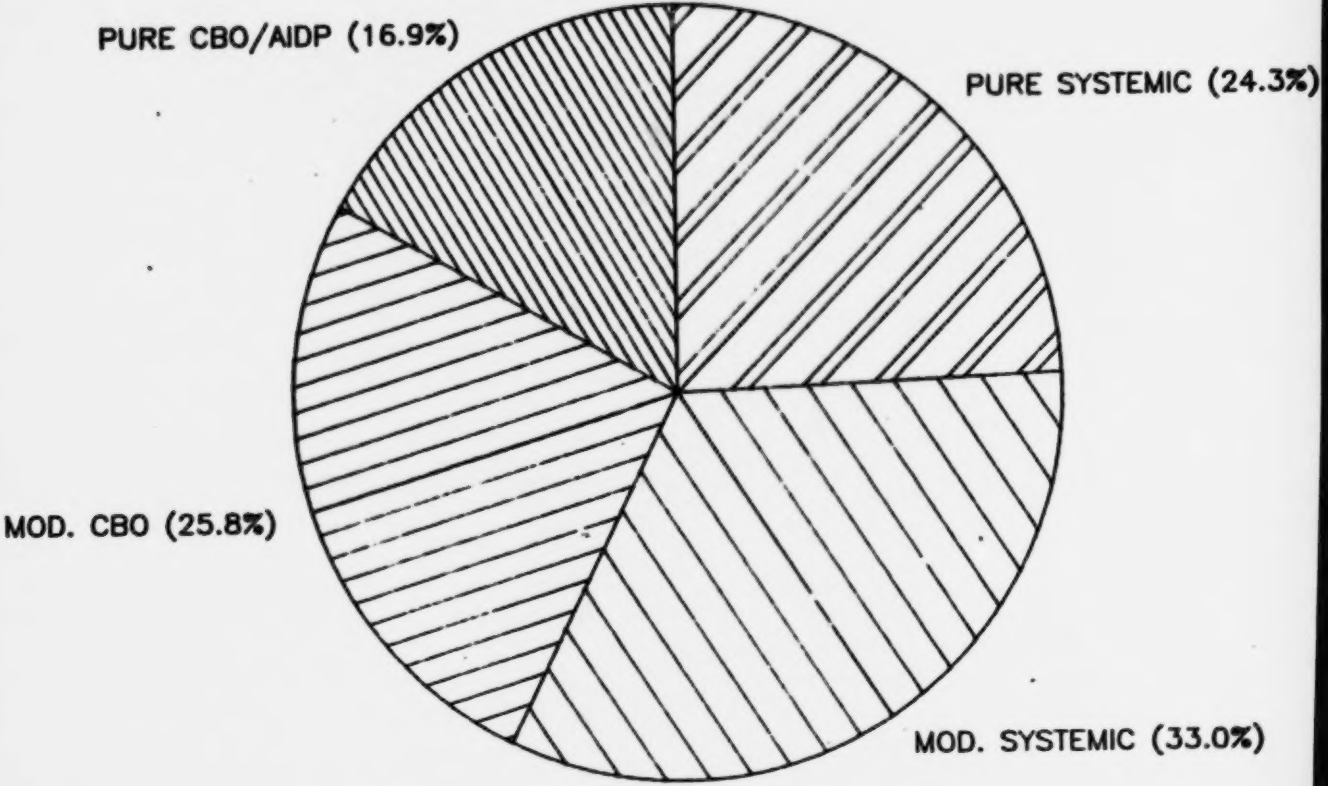

Table 6-2

Comparison of Original Estimates of Eligible Students, Attendance-Eligible Students in 1986-87, and Funding Levels DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	Original At-Risk Estimate*	1986-87 Attendance-Eligible+	Rank	1986-87 Program Budget	Rank
2	494	1174	1	$584,022	8
1	449	833	2	$695,887	5
7	581	810	3	$800,524	4
8	1065	782	4	$909,917	2
12	473	720	5	$573,784	9
6	492	714	6	$883,383	3
5	632	595	7	$922,459	1
11	456	580	8	$678,933	6
9	339	559	9	$386,489	13
3	252	533	10	$445,087	11
4	449	487	11	$535,733	10
10	494	439	12	$659,259	7
13	191	235	13	$393,668	12

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* This figure was derived by multiplying the school's dropout rate, averaged over the latest three years, by the most recent Oct. 31 school register.

+ This figure represents the number of students in the school who meet the attendance-eligibility criteria: 40+ absences in 1986-87 or 20+ absences in Spring, 1987.

come close to alignment on the rank orders.

The original program design envisioned that only a limited number of at-risk students would be able to receive program services. We note these findings on the difference between eligible students and budgeted-for numbers not to claim that some schools received more funding than they deserved, but simply to observe that the size of the eligible population in a given school was not always reflected in the size of the school's DPI budget.

Allocations for community-based organizations. Federation Employment and Guidance Service (FEGS) received the largest CBO budgets for its Operation Success and Operation Futures programs, with allocations ranging from $183,195 at School 13 to $510,330 at School 2. The size of the budgets for the other CBOs ranged from $15,525 for Out There Productions in School 7 to $229,900 for Grand Street Settlement in School 10 (see Table 6-3). In general, CBO funding reflected incremental increases over Year One funding, taking into account provisions for implementation of 12-month contracts and summer programs for students.

Proportions of total budgets allocated to schools vs. CBOs. Across all four DPI models, the schools were budgeted for a total of $5,488,840 (59%), while the 13 CBOs were funded at a level of $3,836,834 (41%). FEGS received approximately 71% of the total amount budgeted for CBOs, with $2,531,610 budgeted for its contract to deliver Operation Success program services in the seven schools in the pure and modified CBO models, and $208,400 budgeted under a separate contract with one of the schools in the modified systemic model (Figures 6-3 and 6-4).

Table 6-4 compares the proportion of program funds allocated to the schools and CBOs in Year One with the Year Two proportions. The three AIDP schools are not included in this table, because in those schools the CBOs received virtually all program funding in both years. The three schools received only very small amounts of money for staff development and for OTPS accounts, and were required to provide staff resources through their own regular school budgets (this budget configuration covers the entire AIDP program in the three schools, including the "pure-CBO" portion and the "school-based" portion). In the schools in the pure systemic and modified systemic program models, there was relatively little change in the way funds were divided -- at most a 6% shift in the proportion of funds going to either the school or the CBO. In the modified CBO schools, however, CBOs lost control of between 19 and 29 percent of the program budgets, and the schools gained control over the corresponding amounts. This occurred not because CBO real dollar allocations were reduced, but largely because in 1986-87, and to some degree in 1987-88 as well, the central DPP staff agreed to provide these schools with modest amounts of funds for GED classes and transitional classes for truants. Overall, the proportion of funding reserved for schools was greater in the pure and modified systemic schools than in the CBO-model schools,

Table 6-3

Budgets for Community-Based Organizations DPI High Schools, 1986-87

Community-based Organization	Affiliated School Code	1986-87 Budget
Aspira	8	$103,500
Cathedral of St. John/Manhattan Valley	5	$ 93,150
Green Chimneys/ Project Continue	5	$108,489
Federation Employment and Guidance Service -- Operation Success	2	$510,330
	3	$213,210
	4	$462,922
	9	$349,479
	11	$462,645
	12	$349,830
	13	$183,195
-- Operation Futures	8	$208,400
Good Shepherd Services	7	$ 32,824
Grand Street Settlement	10	$229,900
Northwest Bronx Clergy and Community Coalition	1	$147,116
Out There Productions	7	$ 15,525
Performing Arts Crisis Training	7	$ 54,831
Pius XII Family/ Community Services	6	$101,777
Urban Adventures	8	$ 65,177
Victim Services/ Project SMART	1	$ 36,678
	3	$ 27,000
	8	$ 36,678
	12	$ 36,678

Figure 6-3

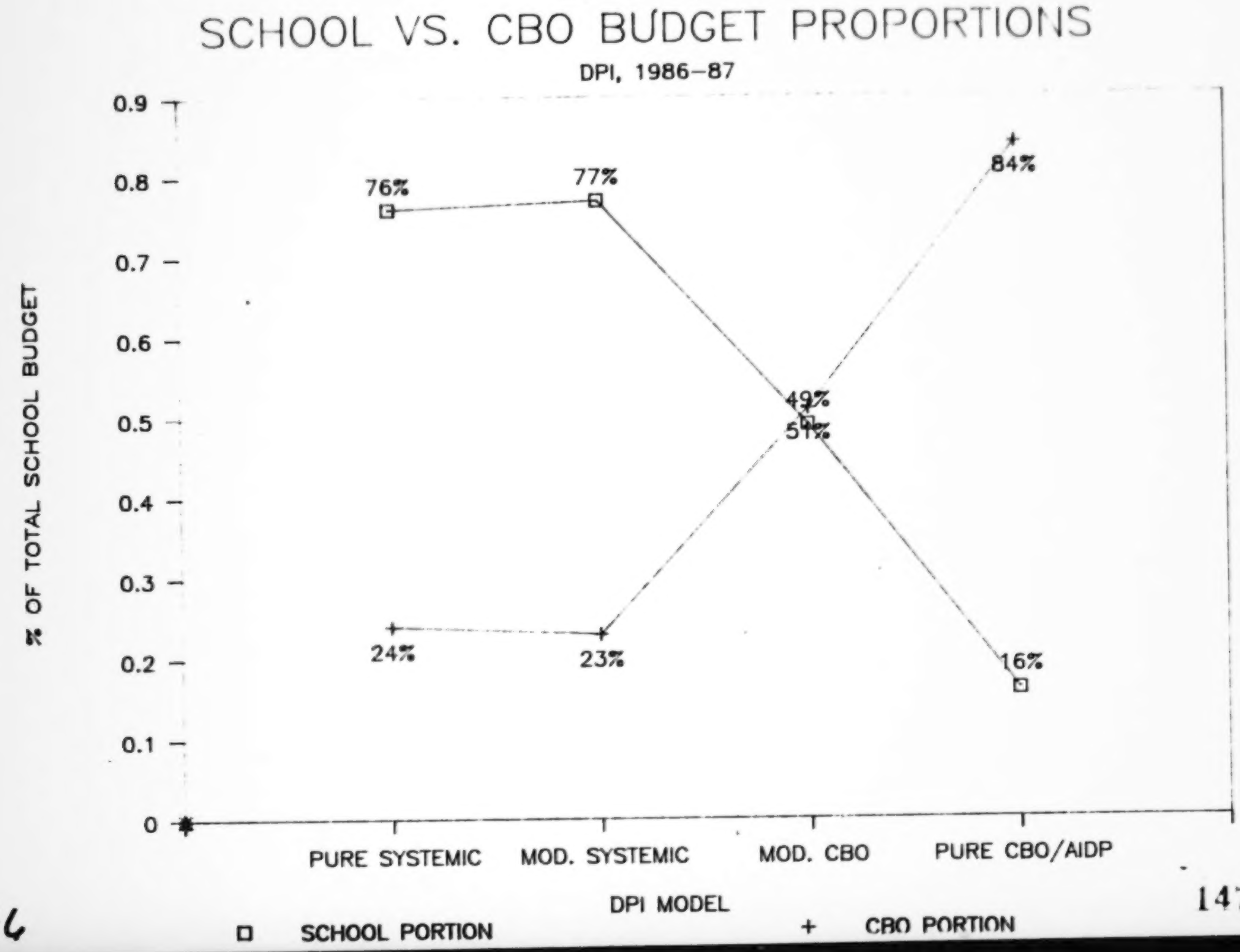
SCHOOL VS. CBO BUDGET PROPORTIONS
DPI, 1986-87
% OF TOTAL SCHOOL BUDGET
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
76%
77%
49%
51%
84%
24%
23%
16%
PURE SYSTEMIC
MOD. SYSTEMIC
MOD. CBO
PURE CBO/AIDP
DPI MODEL
□ SCHOOL PORTION
+ CBO PORTION

Figure 6-4

TOTAL BUDGETS FOR SCHOOLS AND CBOs

DPI, 1986–87

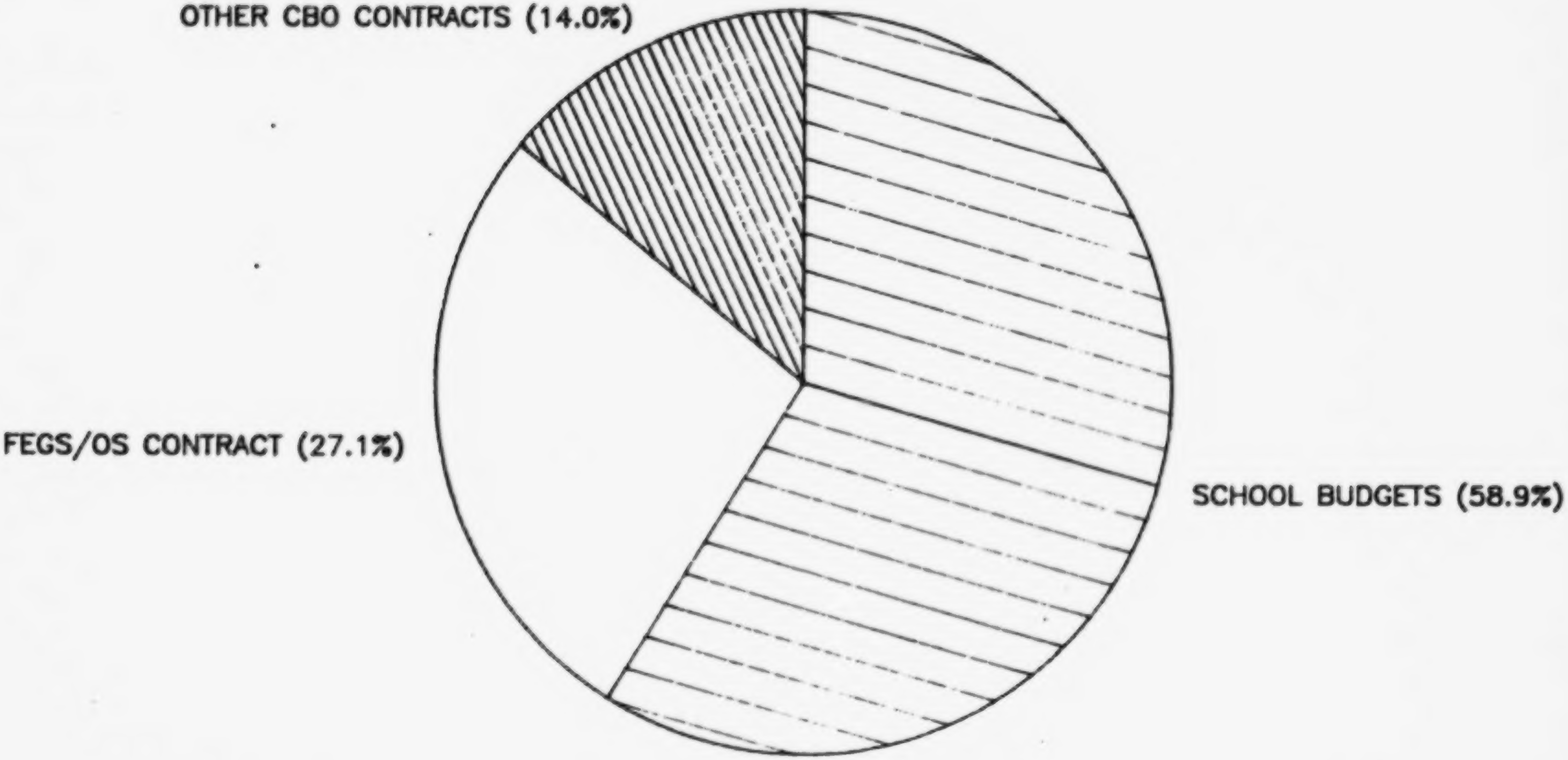

Table 6-4

Change in Percent of Budgets Allocated to Schools and CBOs DPI High Schools, 1986-87

School Code	Total Allocation for 1986-87	% for CBO(s)	Change from 1985-86	% for School	Change from 1985-86
Pure Systemic Model:					
1	$758,383	24.2%	-5.6%	75.8%	5.6%
7	$832,778	12.4%	-3.3%	87.6%	3.3%
10	$677,605	35.0%	1.1%	65.0%	-1.1%
Mod. Syst. Model:					
5	$995,089	20.3%	-5.5%	79.7%	5.5%
6	$979,862	10.4%	-1.2%	89.6%	1.2%
8	$1,100,637	37.6%	-4.4%	62.4%	4.4%
Mod. CBO Model:					
3	$514,941	46.6%	-21.8%	53.4%	21.8%
11	$750,149	61.7%	-18.9%	38.3%	18.9%
12	$653,944	59.1%	-21.1%	40.9%	21.1%
13	$490,316	37.4%	-28.6%	62.6%	28.6%

but since there was little difference among schools in the former two models, they have been combined into a single program model.

DPI funding as a proportion of a school's total budget. Did the Dropout Prevention Initiative bring a significant level of resources into the schools? Table 6-5 shows the proportion of term units and OTPS (Other Than Personnel Services) funds allocated to schools through the Dropout Prevention Initiative, according to central Board of Education school budget reports. DPI unit allocations varied from three percent to almost ten percent of school budgets; OTPS allocations from DPI represented from seven percent to over 37 percent of schools' non-personnel resources. These are not trivial levels of funding, and in most schools they probably represent that margin of funding that gives schools some minimal discretion to go beyond how they *have* to spend money, to explore how they might *want* to. However, the level of DPI funding cannot be construed as providing enough funding for complete school overhauls.

Program Expenditures

Out of an overall budget of $9,674,965, an estimated $8,439,284 was spent on school and CBO programming and $464,109 on central DPP administration, for a total of $8,903,393 (Table 6-1b). Approximately $5,812,490 was funded out of the city's special 0832 tax levy and $371,515 out of its regular school monies. A balance of $2,719,388 was billed to the state through its reimbursable AIDP funds. These proportions are in keeping with the allocation percentages originally established for the three major funding sources.

School and Model Expenditures. As was the case with their budgets, the total school costs ran highest in the pure and modified systemic programs. In the former, they ranged from $659,259 to $792,984 for a total of $2,148,130; and in the latter they ranged from $856,333 to $909,917 and totaled $2,688,759. The total costs in the modified CBO model ran from $393,668 to $573,784 for a total of $2,091,472; and in the pure CBO model, $386,489 to $584,022 and totaled $1,506,244 (Table 6-6). The schools' and CBOs' relative proportions of the total cost for the DPI in the 13 high schools remained very close to their budgeted percentages (Figure 6-5).

Similarly, the relative proportions of all the school and CBO expenditures were in line with their budgeted proportions. The school costs dropped two percentage points to 57% of the total, and the CBO costs rose the same amount to 43%. Expenditures under the two FEGS contracts were again 71% of all CBO costs.

Schools varied somewhat by model in the degree to which they were able to spend their budgets and presumably mount full-scale programs. The pure systemic and pure CBO models ranged from 92% to 100% in school spending rates (with Bushwick overspending

Table 6-5

DPI Funding as a Proportion of Total School Budgets
DPI High Schools, 1986-87*

		General School Allocations			OTPS Allocations			CBOs	
School Code	Model	DPI Term Units+	Total Term Units	% from DPI	From DPI	Total	% from DPI	CBO Budgets	Term Unit Equivalent
1	PURE SYS	26.06	384.14	6.8%	$33,686	$168,979	19.9%	$183,794	10.5
7	PURE SYS	35.30	435.21	8.1%	$100,000	$269,204	37.1%	$103,180	5.9
10	PURE SYS	15.92	319.78	5.0%	$11,866	$153,266	7.7%	$237,400	13.6
5	MOD SYS	37.00	385.07	9.6%	$54,893	$222,553	24.7%	$201,639	11.6
6	MOD SYS	41.25	491.80	8.4%	$87,767	$271,017	32.4%	$101,777	5.8
8	MOD SYS	31.72	439.99	7.2%	$39,900	$226,816	17.6%	$413,755	23.7
3	MOD CBO	10.71	309.08	3.5%	$16,293	$148,674	11.0%	$240,210	13.8
11	MOD CBO	14.23	290.47	4.9%	$13,786	$148,413	9.3%	$462,645	26.5
12	MOD CBO	10.64	324.00	3.3%	$10,121	$138,492	7.3%	$386,508	22.1
13	MOD CBO	10.03	165.71	6.1%	$13,839	$67,496	20.5%	$183,195	10.5

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* This analysis includes the 10 DPP high schools only.

+ A term unit is equivalent to the average teacher salary for one semester; personnel positions are defined in terms of unit values (e.g., 1 teacher = 1 unit, 1 guidance counselor = 1.16 units). In 1986-87, 1 unit had a dollar value of $17,450.

Note: Data on General School Allocations and OTPS Allocations are from *Comparative Analysis of the Organization of High Schools, 1986-87*, produced by the Division of High Schools, New York City Board of Education.

Table 6-6

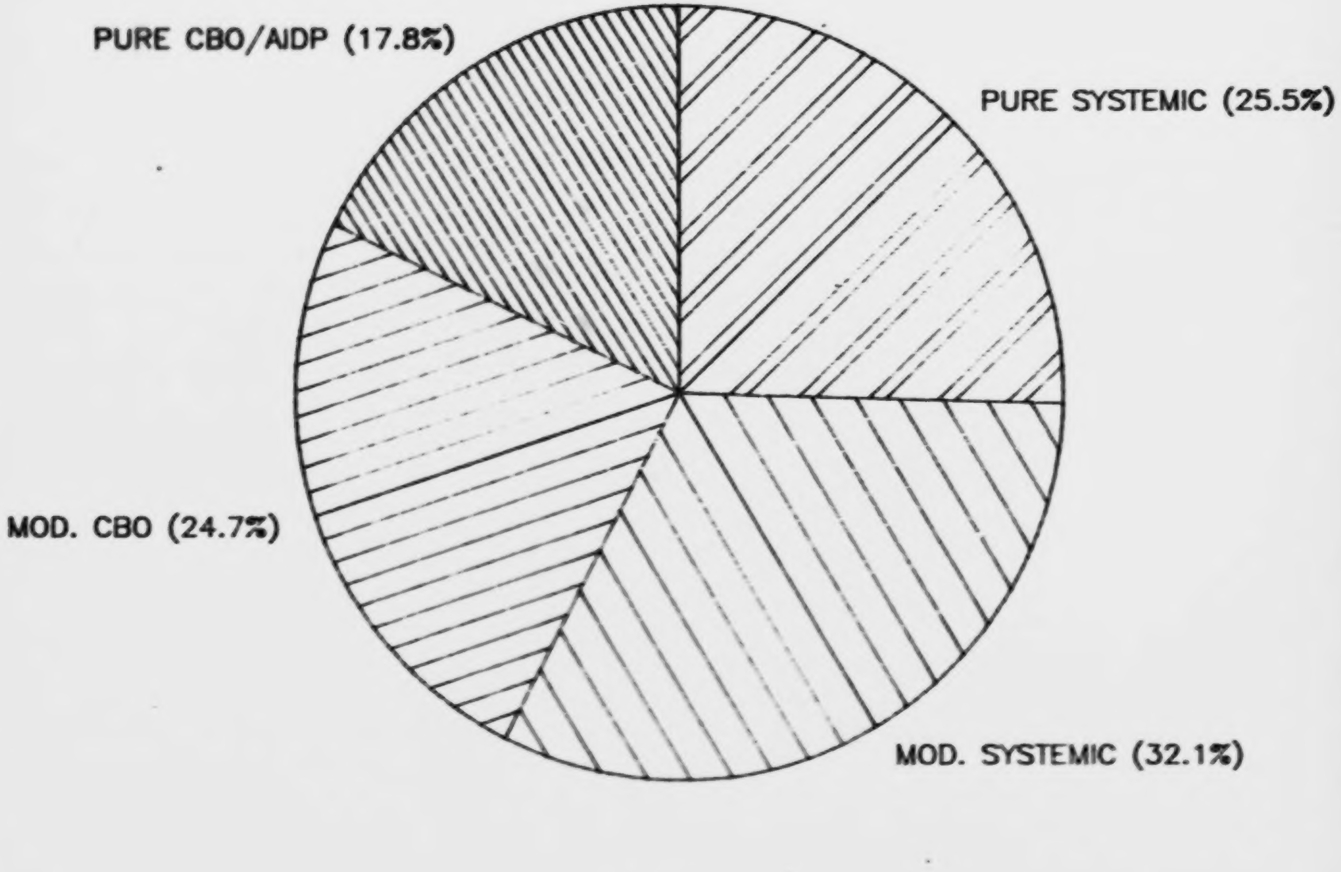
DPI High School Program Expenditures, 1986-87

MODEL	SCHOOL CODE	TOTAL COSTS	PORTIONS		% OF TOTAL COSTS
Pure Systemic:					
	1	$695,887.00	School	$525,898.00	76%
			Metro.Asst.	$35,341.00	5%
			NWBCC	$134,648.00	19%
	7	$800,524.00	School	$704,271.00	88%
			Good Shepherd	$32,603.00	4%
			Out There Prod.	$15,525.00	2%
			PACT	$48,125.00	6%
	10	$659,259.00	School	$440,962.00	67%
			Grand St.	$218,297.00	33%
Modif.Systemic:					
	8	$909,917.00	School	$513,533.00	56%
			Aspira	$102,865.00	11%
			Metro.Asst.	$35,607.00	4%
			Urban Adven.	$64,901.00	7%
			FEGS/Op.Fut.	$193,011.00	21%
	6	$883,383.00	School	$783,065.00	89%
			Pius XII	$100,318.00	11%
	5	$922,459.00	School	$725,892.00	79%
			Cath.St.John	$91,801.00	10%
			Green Chimneys	$104,766.00	11%
Modif. CBO:					
	13	$393,668.00	School	$225,169.00	57%
			FEGS/Op.Succ.	$168,499.00	43%
	12	$573,784.00	School	$207,228.00	36%
			FEGS/Op.Succ.	$332,184.00	58%
			Metro.Asst.	$34,372.00	6%
	11	$678,933.00	School	$245,649.00	36%
			FEGS/Op.Succ.	$433,284.00	64%
	3	$445,087.00	School	$217,717.00	49%
			FEGS/Op.Succ.	$202,680.00	46%
			Metro.Asst.	$24,690.00	6%
Pure CBO:					
	4	$535,733.00	School	$95,469.00	18%
			FEGS/Op.Succ.	$440,264.00	82%
	9	$386,489.00	School	$55,027.00	14%
			FEGS/Op.Succ.	$331,462.00	86%
	2	$584,022.00	School	$98,744.00	17%
			FEGS/Op.Succ.	$485,278.00	83%

Figure 6-5

HIGH SCHOOL EXPENDITURES BY MODEL

DPI, 1986-87



slightly), while the schools in the modified systemic and modified CBO models had a little more difficulty, averaging 84% and 79% respectively. For example, Eastern District (modified systemic) spent 75% of the school portion of its budget, and South Bronx (modified CBO) spent only 73%. As was the case in the middle schools, the CBOs were more successful than the schools in spending their budgets with spending rates across all models ranging from 92% to 99%.

Even with the slightly lower spending rates of school budgets within the modified systemic and modified CBO models, the relative proportions of school versus CBO expenditures by program model is fairly consistent with their budgeted proportions. Referring again to Table 6-6, we find that the school portions of program costs were on average 77% in the pure systemic model; 74% in the modified system; 45% in the modified CBO; and 16% in the pure CBO. These percentages represent only slight changes from the relationships depicted in Figure 6-3 (above).

Per-Pupil Costs

Given that budget levels were a function of problem scope in each school and resulted in wide disparity among them, it is not particularly useful to draw comparisons between the dollar amounts of their budgets or expenditures without also considering the number of students meant to be served. However, it has been very difficult to establish reasonable per-pupil costs, since the number of students served by the Dropout Prevention Initiative is so ambiguous. One problem is that in some of the pure and modified systemic models, only a portion of the students who received direct services through DPI were listed on the program rosters. Another problem is that in all ten of the DPP schools, but particularly in the pure and modified systemic schools, many students might have benefited less directly from systemic components but were not considered program participants in the sense usually thought of. On the other hand, at least two modified CBO schools probably overestimated their student rosters by including students selected for CBO outreach but never actually enrolled in the CBO program.

It is somewhat easier to determine valid per-pupil costs for the community-based organizations, because generally the CBOs had enrollment rosters that were intended to include all students whom they served. We exclude from this analysis those CBOs who do not have many students listed on the DPI program rosters submitted to us; these include Out There Productions, an instructionally-oriented CBO with only one student participant listed on the full program roster, and Performing Arts Crisis Training, which showed no students on the program roster for its school. We also exclude the Victim Services/Project SMART program, because in all sites where it was in operation, only the student mediators tended to have been listed as program participants, yet the costs of that program should be spread across disputants (those students or staff members who had

Table 6-7

Per-Pupil Costs for Community-Based Organizations
DPI High Schools, 1986-87

Community-based Organization	Affiliated School	CBO Total Expenditures	CBO Roster	Per-Pupil Costs
FEGS/Op.Success	2	$485,278.00	439	$1,105
FEGS/Op.Success	4	$440,264.00	590	$746
FEGS/Op.Success	11	$433,284.00	281	$1,542
FEGS/Op.Success	12	$332,184.00	144	$2,307
FEGS/Op.Success	9	$331,462.00	319	$1,039
Grand St. Settlement	10	$218,297.00	60	$3,638
FEGS/Op.Success	3	$202,680.00	197	$1,029
FEGS/Op.Futures	8	$193,011.00	277	$697
FEGS/Op.Success	13	$168,499.00	87	$1,937
NW Bronx Coalition	1	$134,648.00	55	$2,448
Green Chimneys	5	$104,766.00	66	$1,587
Aspira	8	$102,865.00	131	$785
Pius XII	6	$100,318.00	63	$1,592
Cath.St.John/Man Valley	5	$91,801.00	33	$2,782
Urban Adventures	8	$64,901.00	45	$1,442
Good Shepherd Svcs	7	$32,603.00	35	$932

Note: Out There Productions, Performing Arts Crisis Training, and Victim Services/Project SMART are not included in this table, because the full program rosters listed too few students who participated in these CBO programs.

conflicts mediated) as well. (Per-pupil costs for Operation Success in the three AIDP schools are computed by dividing the total CBO costs by the total number of students served, including those receiving only CBO services and those receiving school services as well.)

Table 6-7 shows per-pupil costs for the different community-based organizations. Costs varied from approximately $700 per student for Operation Futures in School 8, to over $3600 per student for Grand Street Settlement in School 10. Although six of the seven Operation Success programs had the largest program costs, they did not have the largest per-pupil expenditures; three other CBOs (Grand Street, Cathedral of St. John/Manhattan Valley, and Northwest Bronx Coalition) had higher per-pupil expenditures. There was quite a range in per-pupil costs among the Operation Success programs, from a high of $2307 per pupil in School 12 to a low of $746 per pupil in School 4.

Conclusion

As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, as much as we wanted to develop some indicators of cost-effectiveness, the arguments against doing so were too compelling. The benefit of such an analysis would be to show where program funds are most successfully applied. The answer to this question will have to await stronger evidence of program effects.

It is likely that adequate funds are important in helping a program produce outcomes large enough to be considered effects. However, as we have indicated elsewhere in this report, many other factors come into consideration, including improved methods of assessing students' strengths and needs, attention to how program services are planned and delivered as well as to what constitutes those services, and consideration of the larger school and community contexts for dropout prevention.

Chapter Seven

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The 1986-87 school year was the second year of implementation of the New York City Dropout Prevention Initiative. Although many components of the program were in place, staff were just beginning to grapple with how to put these components together in the most effective way. This is consistent with expectations; large-scale educational innovations typically take three to five years to become established, use early feedback for program corrections, and show strong results. The function of the Year Two evaluation is to show outcomes of the program at an early stage, particularly the outcomes for students with different entering characteristics, and to suggest changes that need to be made if the Dropout Prevention Initiative is to realize its goals.

The Dropout Prevention Initiative targeted services to students who were considered at risk for school failure or dropout, primarily due to a history of poor attendance. The goals of the Initiative were to: a) improve students' attendance rates over what they had been the previous year, b) improve students' rates of passing courses, and c) reduce the number of students who were discharged as dropouts.

The second year evaluation observed the following results for targeted students who participated in the Dropout Prevention Initiative, contrasted with control students who met the program's attendance eligibility criteria but who were not targeted:

- Targeted students were less likely to be discharged as dropouts than eligible-but-not-targeted students.

- Like eligible-but-not-targeted students, targeted students lost ground in attendance compared with their performance the prior year.

- Similarly, targeted students lost ground in the percentage of courses passed compared with their performance the prior year. (Available data suggests a similar outcome for eligible-but-not-targeted students, although the results are not conclusive.)

- The loss in courses passed was substantially greater for targeted students entering high school from an intermediate or junior high school than it was for other targeted students.

- Targeted males and females attended virtually the same number of days, but males passed courses at a substantially lower rate than females.

- Students in the ten DPP schools who received program services through a community-based organization alone had the greatest losses in attendance and courses passed. Students who received services provided by a combination of school personnel and CBO personnel had the smallest losses in attendance, while students who received services through school personnel only had the smallest losses in courses passed.

- A program in three AIDP schools that combined student support services with changes in school curriculum and programming for targeted students did improve continuing high school students' rate of passing courses significantly.

- There is some weak evidence that students who participated in the Dropout Prevention Initiative for longer periods of time had slightly better attendance and course passing rates than other students.

The lower discharge rates for program students suggest a gain over what might be expected on the basis of control group performance, but the Dropout Prevention Initiative was not successful during 1986-87 in improving student attendance or academic achievement enough to ensure that students would be able to earn a high school diploma within a reasonable length of time. The findings described below indicate particular areas where the Initiative is producing relatively positive or negative outcomes and lead to suggestions for programmatic changes that might improve outcomes.

Recommendations

After reviewing findings based on field observations and statistical analyses, the evaluators have made the following recommendations.

For effective dropout prevention, two goals should be pursued simultaneously *within* any given school: the goal of demonstrating the possibility of a substantial gain for students targeted for dropout prevention, and the goal of school-wide improvement. The first needs concentrated resources and strategies; the second needs a more long-range, developmental plan. In effect, this calls for a broadening and intensification of the two approaches already employed by the DPI, case management and systemic improvement, but seeing them as complementary approaches rather than as different ways to accomplish the same goal.

In both the case management and the systemic approach, improvements in students' instructional program should be combined with the various student support services that the DPI has emphasized. Teachers should be able to adapt curriculum to students' needs, interests, and daily lives. There should be close monitoring of individual student progress, and frequent feedback to students. Elements such as flexible scheduling, increased counseling, part-time jobs, and tutoring should be part of a program that is comprehensive in the type of services it offers, and intense in the amount of services each student receives. This recommendation proceeds from our observation that the relatively few targeted students who received intense and comprehensive services fared better in the program, while most students appeared to receive only a smattering of services.

Results from a survey administered to students indicate that most students have high expectations to finish school and go on to college or some other post-secondary education. However, most targeted students accumulate credits far too slowly to lead to high school graduation in the conventional four years, much less to advance to higher education. Schools need to help students plan programs that are flexible enough to meet their present needs but rigorous enough to allow them to reach their goals. There should be more opportunities to take courses for credit, including credit for remedial courses and for courses offered during extended school hours or the summer.

Given the markedly lower rate of passing courses that was found for male students, even when they had the same level of attendance and reading test performance as female students -- a pattern that was found in the middle schools as well as in the high schools -- attention should be given to ameliorating the factors that contribute to lower grades for males. This would include working directly with the male students, involving adult male role models, and strengthening school staff's positive expectations for male students. This intervention should contribute to a more positive learning environment for all students, both male and female.

Linkages between middle schools and high schools should concentrate on preventing declines in attendance and course performance during the transition from middle school to high school. Rather than simply assume that students will fail in their first year of high school because standards are higher there, high schools and middle schools should plan their curricula for a closer match. In addition, middle school students should learn about high schools in ways that actively counter negative local reputations and encourage identification with the schools. A serious orientation to the student's prospective high school should be given in the spring of the student's last year in middle school, perhaps even involving a credit-bearing mini-course. Finally, at-risk students should have more opportunities to get into their schools of first choice.

The involvement of principals is essential for the successful implementation of a dropout prevention program. The empowerment of school and CBO staff contributes to their taking necessary steps toward the accomplishment of DPI goals. A program that was notably effective in reducing students' suspensions for aggression empowered students themselves to take responsibility for conflict mediation. This might argue for also giving students greater control over the courses they take and, again, over which high school they are enrolled in. In other words, control over dropout prevention efforts should be shared among all parties involved.

Observations and surveys alike demonstrate that school environments must be made more safe, attractive, and appealing for students and staff. There must be a climate of respect that extends down from the larger school bureaucracy, to individual school administrators, teachers and other staff, and students themselves. Many of our recommendations argue for making a high school more like a set of small places, functioning well with one another but each with a community of staff and students who know each other on a face to face basis and who take mutual responsibility for their collective well being.